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- Post Production Gear
- Exotic Extras

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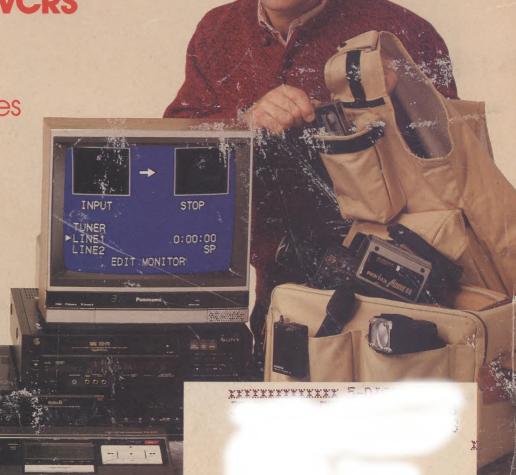
#### **VIDEOTESTS**

35-Inch Tube TV,

VHS Special F/X Camcorder,

Surround Sound Decoder







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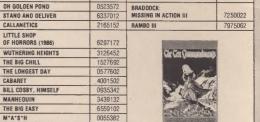
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SHORT CIRCUIT



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## VIDEO

magazine







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#### Cover:

A sampling of the latest in camcorder and editing accessories. Photograph by Jay Brenner.

Video Magazine Volume XII Number 12



## PICK UP A HOT ONE.

ust shout "witchcraft" in 1692 Salem, and watch the sparks—and the laughs—start to fly. Add a real witch to cast a few spells. And the whole town gets fired up.

Saturday Night Live's John Moffitt directs Barbara Carrera and an all-star cast of comedians in this hilarious spoof of one of the darker episodes

in American history.

From a boozing, brawling Thanksgiving feast to a wild night of ladies' clam chowder wrestling, these Puritans prove that they know how to party. But as everyone soon discovers, the real fun starts at the witching hour.

## LOVE of STAKE

AVAILABLE ON VIDEOCASSETTE MARCH 30, 1989



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BARBARA CARRERA

THEY HAD A NAME FOR RAUNCHY.

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A JONATHAN DEMME PICTURE
MICHELLE PFEIFFER
MATTHEW MODINE. DEAN STOCKWELI
"MARRIED TO THE MOB."
MERCEDES RUEHL ALEC BALDWIN
Music by DAVID BYRNE
Production Designer KRISTI ZEA
Director of Photography TAK FUJIMOTO
Edited by CRAIG McKAY, A.C.E.
Executive Producers JOEL SIMON
and BILL TODMAN, JR.
Written by BARRY STRUGATZ
& MARK R. BURNS
Produced by KENNETH UTT
and EDWARD SAXON

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## **CHANNEL ONE**

### Making connections

One of the most significant events at the recent Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas has less to do with new products than with the ties that bind them. The Electronic Industry Association's Home Automation exhibit officially introduced the Consumer Electronics Bus (CEBus), a new engineering standard capable of integrating a broad range of consumer products, appliances and services into a home communications and control network.

Developed over the last four years and agreed upon by 50 major manufacturers, CEBus takes us a giant step closer to home automation and should also act as a catalyst for many "smart" new products with compatible interfaces. It will allow home-oriented products—including air conditioners, heaters and security devices—to "talk" to each other via multiple pathways, including power lines, telephone lines, coaxial and fiber optic cables and RF and infrared communication links.

Applications are limited only by manufacturers' imaginations. Homeowners will, for example, be able to signal their lights to go on, the hot water heater to prepare for morning showers, the dishwasher to run, the home security system to kick in and the VCR to record programs for the week from several control consoles. Motion detectors could sense when an elderly person is unusually still and, in the event of no response, automatically telephone for help. EIA's push toward a common standard is good news for consumers, who will be able to put the standard in place, application by application, over a period of time, as they can afford them.

We'll be bringing you more about "smart home" systems in a future issue, but the push to establish links between diverse electronic products also makes itself felt in related arenas. This month's "Codebusters" feature focuses on VCRs that bridge the international video standard barriers between NTSC, PAL and SECAM. These include Instant Replay's Image Translator VCRs that can be used with any TV, as well as multi-standard VCRs that must be used with multi-standard monitors.

In the rapidly expanding world of amateur video production and post production, however, compatibility problems still persist. Take adapters, for instance. Even jacks are not standard, let alone signal levels. Knowing and finding gear that will work with yours demands constant vigilance.

That's why you should read this month's special section on video accessories, "Shoot and Edit Like a Pro," bearing several caveats in mind. First, know what you want to do beforehand so you'll purchase the right gear. Be aware that each accessory does something different and that no single one can do everything. Be aware, also, there are no universal editing controllers, although some manufacturers claim there are. Second, get verbal or written assurance the seller will take back a piece of equipment if it doesn't work with yours. Finally, get hands-on demonstrations of all equipment before you purchase any, and don't rely on someone else to do your homework for you. If you observe these basic cautions, every accessory you add to enhance your production and editing capability should help you create videos with the look and sound only professionals used to achieve.

Judith Sawyer
Editor-in-Chief



## **FEEDBACK**

#### Do-it-yourself TVCR

I'm 13 years old, and when I read "TVCRs to Go" (May '88), I told my father I wanted one, but he just laughed. Then one day I came home from school and he handed me my own TVCR that he put together using my JVC GRC-7U camcorder and a black & white LCD-TV he bought at Crazy Eddie for \$19. He had taken the viewfinder off and added a cheap speaker with Velcro and a plug for the earphone jack of the TV. The TV attaches to the pop-up cassette hatch with Velcro so the camcorder can open to change tapes. The TV is attached to the RF unit that came with the GRC-7U. My dad also made a light cardboard case to cover the front lens, the back and the top. I can use the TVCR with a battery or a car cord. When I want to use my camcorder, all I do is take off the speaker and the TV, unplug the cables and replace the view-finder. My TVCR is a big hit on the school bus and at lunch time.

Carol Curtis Guilford, Conn.

#### Beta blanksmanship

Why do major video retailers continue to sell every grade of blank Beta tape even after they have stopped renting and selling pre-recorded Beta videos? I am outraged by the notion that large retailers, who can best afford to carry Beta software, routinely ignore this segment while continuing to profit from sales of blank tapes. If retailers don't think there are enough Betaphiles in their ranks, who do they think is purchasing their blank tapes?

Henry R. Fischbach New York, N.Y.

#### Def-initely grateful

"Hi-Def in a Decade" (Dec. '88) was extremely refreshing, and I thank you for

Video Magazine welcomes your comments. Please include a phone number, but not a return envelope as the volume of mail does not permit replies. Letters may be edited for clarity and space. Address correspondence to Feedback, Video Magazine, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001.



myself and for all those who believe in better video. During my final year in college I became obsessed with the idea of a higher quality broadcast standard, but found the research on the subject confusing. Many articles were unclear and seemed to contradict one another. Your article was technical enough for those of us who have been following the hi-def struggle, yet not so complex as to alienate those with a less technical background.

Carter L. Hoskins Irving, Texas

#### Seeing is believing

I read "Visions of 1988" (Dec. '88) and was surprised by your comment that Philips' 27- and 31-inch IDTVs were available in stores. I contacted all Philips dealers in New York and Long Island, and none had seen the sets. I called the consumer affairs department at Philips and received a letter saying that IDTVs would be manufactured within the next two months. I'd like to know why you wrote that IDTV sets would be available at the beginning of December.

Leon Polevoy Commack, N.Y.

Philips IDTVs have been available since December, but only at a limited number of dealers where they've been selling out faster than the company can make them. Philips asks for your patience.

#### Lives of a tape

I enjoyed Bob Fontana's "Keeping Tape Alive and Well" (Nov. '88). It answered a lot of questions I had about the longevity of videotape. Tom Mitchell Dayton, Ohio

#### Correction

The photograph on the cover of January's issue was shot by Jay Brenner.

## VID EO

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Unretouched scene shot with Panasonic PV-300 Camcorder under 60 lux available light.



Unretouched scene shot with same camera equipped with SUNPAK compact, cordless video light.



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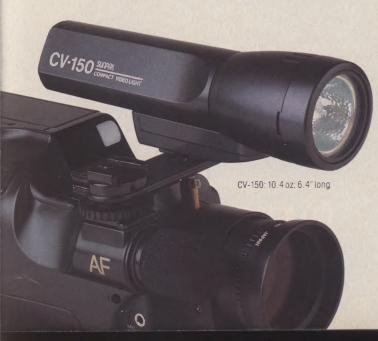
So to get the most out of every scene and the best out of every video camera, use a SUNPAK video light.

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## **LATE NEWS**

#### CES at a glance: HDTV, still video, DAT

The near future has stolen the spotlight at the thirty-ninth Consumer Electronics Show, which closes in Las Vegas as this issue goes to press. In a show notably shy of new blockbuster video products (although Philips' new CDV 488 combi laser player with Y/C jacks may prove an exception) such emerging technologies as high-definition TV and consumer-grade still video cameras are drawing heavy interest.

Several HDTV displays — most dramatically by Philips and Barco, a Belgian TV maker — are giving those who deal directly with video consumers detailed looks at this important technology. The show also provided a forum for 17 U.S. manufacturers, including IBM, to start exploring the creation of a joint HDTV consortium that could effectively compete for leadership in the world HDTV market.

But while HDTV percolates, CES clearly established still video, heavily promoted in recent years among professionals, as an aspiring consumer medium. Several companies - including Sony, Konica, Olympus and Casio - are introducing still video cameras and accessories at prices between about \$700 and \$2,000. The cameras' relatively high cost and poor picture quality (compared to film photography) virtually guarantee a slow start among consumers, but their flexibility, speed, convenience and light weight make still video a medium to watch. (Look for a full round-up of these and other CES introductions in next month's issue.)

Two trends that show no signs of abating are the improving quality of TV pictures and audio designed for video. Large new screens by Mitsubishi and NEC, and a dazzling 13-incher by NAD, demonstrate that the NTSC standard still leaves room to maneuver. Meanwhile, a steady flow of new receivers, surround sound devices, stereo VCRs and TVs with enhanced audio features—like models from Toshiba and Tera—continue to add sonic muscle to the home viewing experience. For example, the Lexicon CP-1 Audio Environment Processor reviewed in this

issue's "Videotests" will be updated by the CP-2, a less costly model more specifically tailored for video buffs.

In a related audio area, digital audio tape, DAT/USA International of Trenton, New Jersey and Japan America Electronics of Santa Monica, California hope to break the DAT logjam by selling various brands of DAT recorders to dealers without the manufacturers' authorizations, but with English manuals, power adapters and their own warranties. DAT sources include Technics, Panasonic, Pioneer, Akai and Sony.



Read My Lips: Broderbund's U-Force lets players run Nintendo games without touching anything.

#### May the force be U

The Nintendo Entertainment System, the nation's hottest video toy, is getting an add-on that employs a remarkable technique to play and control videogames. Called U-Force, it's essentially a stickless joystick. Invented by David Capper for Broderbund, U-Force plugs into Nintendo's joystick port. Its twin sensor-packed panels record a player's position, motion and velocity, then translate the data into onscreen actions, letting players control Nintendo characters without actually touching anything. For example, to play Mike Tyson's Punch Out!!, a player simply jabs in midair. The computer Tyson follows suit. The \$69.95 gizmo is compatible with most Nintendo cartridges and promises improved performance on about half.



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## GAZETTE



Gang of Three: Michelle Pfeiffer and Matthew Modine in Married to the Mob, Demme (above right).

#### Mob boss is Mr. Nice Guy

A funny thing happens when the end credits start rolling in *Married to the Mob*, the Jonathan Demme film hitting video stores this month: outtakes from the movie appear on the screen. Demme explains, "We had to take out a lot of scenes we were really fond of to find the right pacing, so this was a way of retaining them."

The story has Michelle Pfeiffer as the wife of a suburban mobster. She wants a divorce and a new life free of attachments to the likes of Dean Stockwell, her husband's colleague and murderer. Demme credits the "humor, freshness and unrestrainted imagination" of the premise to the original

screenplay by Barry Strugatz and Mark R. Burns. "It's a gangster movie focusing on a woman. I love that. The hardest thing in the world for a filmmaker is



finding a good screenplay" in a sea of "copycat scripts." Imagine — an *auteur* who credits authors!

Demme is Mr. Nice Guy. Though short and paunchy and unremarkable looking, he lights up his surroundings with good cheer, and it's that sense of fun that energizes his movies (e.g., Something Wild, Melvin & Howard, Citizens Band). His resume also includes films of concerts (Talking Heads' Stop Making Sense), performance art (Spalding Gray's Swimming to Cambodia), a documentary (Haiti Dreams of Democracy) and music videos for various groups.

Demme's producing his next film, Miami Blues, with fellow Roger Corman alumnus George Armitage directing. His next directing job will be Continental Drift, from Russell Banks' book.

One thing Demme won't be doing is supervising an expanded video cut of Married to the Mob. "Is there something more tolerant about watching at home? Can you open up to a longer version, a slower, more detailed story than you can in a theater?" —Mark Fleischmann

#### Is it Super yet?

For the hundred thousand or so video enthusiasts who have bought into the Super VHS revolution, the uncertainty about when movies will become available in the format has been a major annoyance. Recent pre-recorded S-VHS releases in Japan would be encouraging if only American studios would indicate their intention to follow suit.

With the goal of promoting their S-VHS machines, two hardware manufacturers have now brought the prospect of superior-looking movies on tape tantalizingly close. In October, Mitsubishi announced that its \$900 HS-423UR VCR would be sold bundled with S-VHS copies of RoboCop and On Golden Pond. The following month, Hitachi introduced a plan of its own: through mid-'89, purchasers of a Hitachi S-VHS camcorder or VCR will get a list of 40 films that can be ordered in S-VHS by mail at \$39.98 each.

While intriguing, neither of these promotions (both involving Orion Home Video) means that S-VHS movies are coming to your video store soon. Retailers just getting over the problems they faced with Beta are not happy about the possibility of a return to multiformat inventories. Studios are likewise cautious about the costs and logistics of what is still a niche product. But at least it's a step in the right direction.

-Ira Robbins

## Playboy's newest video star

More than 4,000 beauties hoped to get those coveted staples in their navel but, when the dust cleared, the winner of "The Great 35th Anniversary Playmate Hunt" was a woman with big feet and a name that seems predestined for bunnyhood: Fawna MacLaren.

In the old days, *Playboy*'s "gatefold girls" just had to look good and smile for the camera. But these are video days, and MacLaren is also the star of *Video Centerfold*, an hour-long pictorial of how she and two runners-up vied for stapledom. At a recent press lunch in Man-



Beauty and the Beach: Fawna MacLaren beat out 4,000 women to be in the 35th anniversary gatefold.

hattan, MacLaren took stock of her success.

"As well as looking for someone physically right for the part, they wanted a good personality, someone who's outgoing," she says. "Video is different from still pictures. It shows more of your personality and what you're willing to do."

It took two weeks to shoot the video, but MacLaren says it was a pleasant experience. "They were discreet and they gave me all the food I wanted." Indeed, during lunch, the five-foot-10, 122-pound model with the sensuous, carefully outlined lips did not skimp on the Peking duck.

The 23-year-old native of Santa Monica has modeled all over Europe. In addition to the usual vital statistics and what she refers to as big feet (but who's looking?), her assets include a fiancee whose big sister is Brigitte Nielsen. In fact, it was at a birthday party for Sly's ex that someone suggested MacLaren apply to the bunny hunt.

"I'd love to do comedy or something extremely dramatic," says the would-be actress. "I know they're opposites, but I'm a person of extremes."

-Jami Bernard

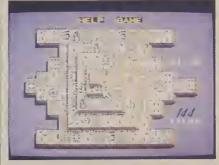
#### Time for games

Although Nintendo has established a firm foothold as America's favorite video game system, Sega is building a faithful minority following, thanks to its stunning graphics, innovative 3-D technology and translations of exciting arcade hits like Shinobi and Thunder Blade. While providing an impressive lineup of software for trigger-happy teenagers, however, Sega has also introduced a few titles meant to stimulate brain cells rather than adrenaline.

Monopoly is one of the best games yet for any video game system. This translation of the classic board game allows up to ten players (computerized or human) to compete. The computer players are no pushovers: at the beginning level they are annoyingly slow and conservative but at the expert end they can be very devious. If you haven't played Monopoly in a while, or if you're an avid fan who has trouble rounding up opponents, Sega's Monopoly is a delight.

Shanghai seems deceptively simple, but it's exasperatingly addictive. The 144 tiles from a mah-jongg set are arranged, face up, in a pyramid called the "dragon formation." The challenge is to remove the tiles in matching pairs, but if you move the wrong ones you may leave other tiles stuck. It's extremely difficult to remove every tile—I managed it the first time I played but only twice since then. The Chinese characters can be difficult to read at first, but eventually you get used to them. The computer offers hints if you get stuck, and you can compete against friends or a timer.

-Lou Kesten



First One's Free: Sega's Shanghai is "deceptively simple and exasperatingly addictive."

#### **GAZETTE**

## Tom Smothers' flick of the wrist

Once again, Tom Smothers gives new meaning to the term yo-yo. The Gracie Allen half of the Smothers Brothers portrays an almost mystical character called The Yo-Yo Man in a new made-for-video comedy/how-to of the same name. Made up of routines from the siblings' recent limited-run CBS-TV series plus newly shot instructional material, Yo-Yo Man turns out to be—to paraphrase a Smothers' electronics commercial—smart, very smart.

Tom explains how he and brother Dick "had all the Yo-Yo Man routines in our show, and we got a lot of letters asking, 'How do you do that trick?' We had so much response that we actually licensed our name for a yo-yo."

The video, in addition to the comedy, features Tom and a "master yo-ist" named Daniel Volk teaching nine basic tricks, including Walk the Dog and Flying Saucer. It also

thinking about putting together three or four with the original commercials, but we don't know if anybody's really interested."

—Frank Lovece

#### Larry "Bud" Melman bakes a video potato

"I'm a stickler for a well-balanced diet," intones Larry "Bud" Melman as he mashes together a concoction he calls "Meat Loops"—colored cereal, red meat and beer—during the taping of *The Couch Potato Workout*, a gag video for people who are hard pressed to lift and flex the remote control.

Melman (real name: Calvert De-Forest), a familiar foil on *Late Night with David Letterman*, is the perfect host of such a video. "I'm a simple guy. I like the basic comforts," he says between takes of Scene 26. It's now Take No. 165, and the Meat Loops are beginning to turn. ("Eughhhh! Nauseous!" he complains.)

"I kind of like things nice and easy,"





Tummy Yummy: Larry "Bud" Melman serves as the unfitness guru in the Couch Potato Workout video.

he admits. "That's why I like this video. There hasn't been any real work involved." The director, publicist and marketing executive who are hovering over their star as if he were a favored child grow edgy; Larry "Bud" does not always say the appropriate thing off-camera. When asked who would buy this video (scheduled for release this spring), he says, "Well, not the Jane Fonda people. Definitely not. Let's see, who would watch this?" His babysitters suggest that his many fans are potential customers. "Naaaah," says Larry "Bud" before he is whisked away to lip-synch his disco theme song, "Born to Sit," for an MTV clip.

The tape's tongue-in-cheek exercises include the Chip Extension. Reach, grasp the potato chip firmly, dip, twist and retrieve. Then there's the Remote Control Thumb Press. In the advanced workout, there's the Fanny Clench, but Melman isn't crazy about that one and won't talk about it. "I don't

do that, noooooo."

Larry "Bud," who confesses to eating nacho chips and drinking beer while watching soaps all day in lounging pajamas in his Brooklyn apartment, says he has some personal tips for couch potatoes. "Don't strain yourself," he warns. "Just relax in an armchair. I advise this for everybody." Then he laughs his trademark laugh and stuffs a fresh bowl of Meat Loops in the microwave.

-Jami Bernard



Stringalong: Tom Smothers with yoyo (right) and brother Dick (left).

proposes a Zen-like philosophy that leads to "The Advanced State of Yo." (Wide green suspenders are apparently required to reach yo-yo nirvana.)

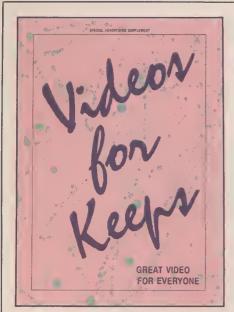
The video was not done for the money, he insists. And, at \$1I.95 per tape, that's probably true. "Not everything has to create cash flow," he notes, conceding, however, that the tape has promotional value. "Yo-ing, beyond the game aspect, is a matter of—I don't want to say spiritual but—an exercise in calmness and concentration, which are very important."

What about bringing to video the classic I960s Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour—a significant slice of sociopolitical and pop culture? "We're holding off," Tom acknowledges. "We were

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#### **ADVENTURE**

First Blood. HBO Video. 96 min. VHS, Beta. 1985. Sylvester Stallone and Richard Crenna star in this adventure about Rambo, a former Green Beret haunted by memories of Vietnam. Caught in the middle of a life or death manhunt with an overzealous sheriff, his posse and the National Guard, he is forced to use all his skills to stay alive.—\$19.99

The Big Easy HBO Video. 100 min. VHS, Beta. 1987. Dennis Quaid and Ellen Barkin star in this romantic thriller featuring a saucy blend of New Orleans nightlife, steamy romance, and suspense.—\$19.99

No Way Out. HBO Video. Kevin Costner stars in a harrowing thriller about a navy hero who gets caught up in a political cover-up and must prove himself innocent of a crime he did not commit — or lose his life.—\$19.99

Raw Deal. HBO Video. 97 min. VHS, Beta. 1986. Arnold Schwarzenegger plays Mark Kaminsky, a former FBI hot shot who begins a journey into the murderous world of the mafia when he agrees to single-handedly nail top mobsters in order to get his old job back.—\$19.99

Terminator. HBO Video. 108 min. VHS, Beta. 1985. Arnold Schwarzenegger plays a fearless cyborg who arrives on earth to fulfill a deadly mission: kill a young woman before she conceives a child who will become

the enemy of the future rulers of the earth. —\$19.99

#### COMEDY

Back to School. HBO Video. 96 min. VHS, Beta. 1987. Rodney Dangerfield takes on academia as Thornton Melon so that he can set a good example for his son, who is thinking of leaving school in this comedy about college, coeds and capitalism. Co-stars Sally Kellerman. —\$19.99

Hannah and Her Sisters. HBO Video. 103 min. VHS & Beta. 1987. Woody Allen documents the relationship of three close but different sisters and the predicaments of nearly a dozen other characters that touch upon universal subjects like love, life, death, lust, religion, and adultery. Starring Mia Farrow, Barbara Hershey and Michael Caine. Nominated for seven Academy Awards. —\$19.99



Sports Illustrated: Get the Feeling

Nothing in Common. HBO Video. 119 min. VHS, Beta. 1987. Tom Hanks and Jackie Gleason star in this heart-wrenching comedy about a son and his hard-to-handle dad whom he gradually learns to love. —\$19.99

Three Amigos. HBO Video. 105 min. VHS, Beta. 1987. Steve Martin, Chevy Chase and Martin Short portray three bumbling Hollywood actors caught in a comic adventure in a re-

mote Mexican village besieged by bandits who think the Amigos have come for them. Directed by John Landis (Animal House, Trading Places) and produced by Saturday Night Live producer Lorne Michaels.

—\$19.99

#### MUSIC

Amadeus. HBO Video. 158 min. VHS, Beta. 1985. The story of the classical music prodigy Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who charms and antagonizes the royalty while generating some of the greatest music in history. —\$29.99

#### SPORTS

All New Not-So-Great Moments in Sports. HBO Video. 45 min. VHS, Beta. 1988. Bloopers of the most hilarious incidents in sports history include Muhammad Ali's confrontation with a kick boxer and several knockouts of game officials.—\$14.99

Get the Feeling: Winning. HBO Video. 60 min. VHS, Beta. 1988. Experience the true ecstatic spirit of winning with Olympic gold medalist Jeff Blatnick, NCAA basketball champions and other great celebrations of sports triumphs.—\$14.99

Mike Tyson's Greatest Hits. HBO Video. 60 min. VHS, Beta. 1988. An exciting ringside look at the incredible career of boxing champion Mike Tyson including the devastating KO's of Trevor Berbick, Marvis Frazier, and Larry Holmes that earned him the nickame "Iron Mike." —\$19.99

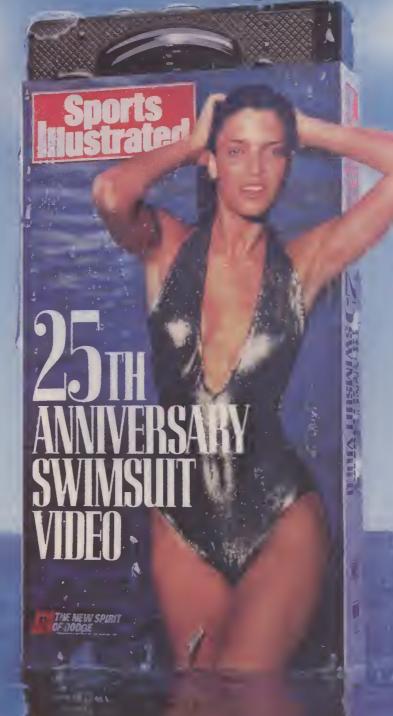
Not-So-Great Moments in Sports. HBO Video. 54 min. VHS, Beta. 1987. The original collection of sporting mishaps including a wrong way football run, and the tempers of basket-

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A Week With Raquel. HBO Video. 120 min. VHS, Beta. 1987. A 7-day wake up and shape-up program that includes short morning workouts and a music video from Raquel Welch.—\$19.99

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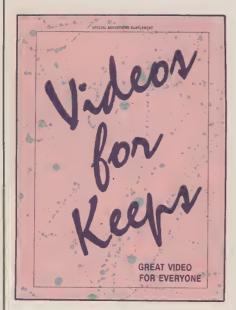


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TIME-LIFE VIDEOS'series, World At War, winner of the 1974 Emmy Award for Outstanding Documentary and narrated by Sir Laurence Olivier, tells the story of World War II using news footage shot during the war. The video series includes action at the front and in war rooms around the world, as well as interviews with statesmen and military leaders of the time. It also chronicles events through the experience of ordinary men and women - American, British, German, Japanese and Russian.

The Vietnam: A Television History series won a total of six Emmy awards for its poignant examination of American involvement in this televised war. From the killing fields to the Oval Office to the riots and protests on American soil, this series will shed light on a crucial period in world history that our society is only just beginning to come to terms with.

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in the First World War, German turns to a charismatic new leader: Adolph Hitler. German newsreels chronicle Hitler's dizzying rise to power — the mass rallies, goose-stepping parades and brilliant propaganda — while Eva Braun's home movies provide rare glimpses of Hitler the man .-\$24.95

Distant War. Time-Life Video. German troops storm into Poland on September 1, 1939. Two days later, Britain declares war but remains dangerously unprepared for battle. Amidst the political turmoil a somewhat unlikely political dark horse is appointed Prime Minister: Winston Churchill.—\$24.95

France Falls. Time-Life Video. Fearing invasion, the French army hunkers down behind the Maginot Line — a chain of "impregnable" fortresses and underground supply lines. But the Nazi war machine, using armor and air power, skirts the heavily defended line and forges south, sweeping the French forces in front of them. Within weeks, France has fallen .-\$24.95

Alone. Time-Life Video. With France occupied, America neutral and Russia in league with Germany, Britain is alone. Its strength and morale are tested as Britain suffers the Blitz bombing raids that on one night alone kill or injure 3,000 in London. Suddenly, in April, 1941, Hitler invades In Our Way. Time-Life Video. Ameri-

Russia and Britain is spared.-

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Banzai. Time-Life Video. In the East, the Japanese have been at war with China since 1931. December 7, 1941 witnesses the infamous attack on Pearl Harbor — and the start of an all-conquering sweep through the Pacific and Southeast Asia. The British prove even less prepared than the Americans. As the Japanese advance on Singapore, the British retreat.— \$24.95



ca now faces two different wars — in Europe and the Pacific. Although President Roosevelt is committed to fight against both Germany and Japan, Congress is not. Many Americans are torn between peace and patriotism. Finally Hitler declares war on the United States and America rolls up its sleeves to fight.—\$24.95

Desert. Time-Life Video. The war in North Africa is fought and refought over 600 miles of sand between Alexandria and Benghazi. After three long years of heat, flies and sandstorms, the duel between Field Marshall Rommel's famed Africa Corps and Lord Montgomery's "Desert Rats" ends at the second battle on El Alamein.—\$24.95

Stalingrad. Time-Life Video. The defenders of Stalingrad mastermind a stunning defeat of the "superior" German Sixth Army. When the bloody battle is over, 70,000 Germans have been killed and 100,000 wounded. Field Marshal Von Paulus defies Hitler's orders and surrenders; for the first time, the Germans have been beaten in the field.—\$24.95

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packs" roam the chill North Atlantic waters.—\$24.95

Red Star. Time-Life Video. For 890 days Leningrad is besieged. In this city of 3 million, some 200,000 are killed by German shells and another 600,000 die of cold and starvation. The Russian army not only survives but goes on to defeat the Germans.—\$24.95

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#### VIETNAM: A HISTORY

Tet, 1968. Time-Life Video. Introductory tape. General William Westmoreland, U.S. Commander in Vietnam, sounded a note of optimism on November 21, 1967. "A new phase is now starting. We have reached a point when the end begins to come into view." But North Vietnam was also thinking about new beginnings. In late January '68, on the eve of Tet, the Vietnamese New Year, a massive nationwide offensive of Vietcong and Northern troops struck the major cities of the south, shocking the American public. The U.S. Embassy in Saigon was also an attack target. Hue, the former capital city of South Vietnam, was held for 25 days - and became the location of a counteroffensive that led to the fiercest fighting of the entire Tet offensive. This gripping tape examines Tet and its political consequences for President Lyndon Johnson. Emmy Award winning and acclaimed for its piercing examination of the crisis, this documentary lets you see and feel Vietnam as it was in 1968.—\$9.95

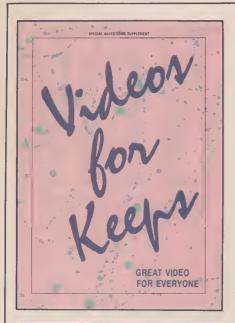
America Takes Charge — 1967-1967. Time-Life Video. Ameri-



"...From the killing fields to the Oval Office to the riots and protests on American soil, Time-Life's award-winning 'Vietnam: A Television History' series sheds light on a crucial period in the history of America and of the world..."

can combat troops went to South Vietnam to prevent a communist victory. After years of its advisory status, American began to wage war directly in 1964, when the Army of the South began to lose. America Takes Charge tells the gripping story of some of the men sent to fight during the two and a half year period over which the Johnson administration escalated America's role. Includes a multi-perspective reconstruction of operation "Cedar Falls" — a large-scale search and destroy mission with accounts from U.S. and Vietnamese survivors. One and a half million American GI's were in Vietnam then - fighting the Northern-supported guerillas, the Vietcong and the North Vietnamese, an enemy not easily recognized. The enemy chose the time and place to fight able to fortify supplies and reinforcements with ease. Former Marine Bill Ehrhart describes how his unit kept losing men to mines and snipers, and gradually turned against the Vietnamese.-\$19.95

Homefront, U.S.A. Time-Life Video. Vietnam was not only the first televised war, it was the first that Americans had opposed openly and in large numbers. See the stateside social upheaval that Vietnam spurred—changing forever the American reaction to its government's foreign policy decisions.—\$19.95



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Mozart: La Clemenza di Tito. Poly-Gram Records. Troyanos, Neblett, Malfitano. Vienna Philharmonic conducted by James Levine. Deutsche Grammaphon.

Puccini: Madame Butterfly. Poly-Gram Records. Mirela Freni, Placido Domingo, Christa Ludwig. Vienna Philharmonic conducted by Herbert von Karajan. London Records. An opera for newcomers to the art and seasoned listeners alike.

Verdi: Otello. PolyGram Records. Vickers, Freni, Glossop. Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Herbert von Karajan. Deutsche Grammaphon. Retells the classic Shakespearean tale in one of the world's most famous and best liked - operatic masterpieces.

Verdi: Falstaff. PolyGram Records. Bacquier, Stilwell. Vienna Philharmonic conducted by Sir Georg Solti. London Records.



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#### BY RODERICK WOODCOCK

#### Computervision

I want to attach a tuner to my computer monitor in order to watch TV shows. Can you suggest any companies Paul Docr that sell such a tuner? Suisun, Calif.

First, be sure you have a compatible monitor. Many inexpensive computers use regular TVs as monitors, broadcasting the computer signal to channel 3 or 4 as a modulated RF signal, just like a VCR. Other models offer composite video and audio input jacks, which provide better picture quality. Most better color monitors intended for computers use RGB (red, green, blue) signals that are incompatible with conventional TV signals. If your monitor is fitted with composite video and audio inputs, you can casily feed it the signal from an external tuner.

Stand-alone outboard tuners used to be widely available, when they were sold as the second halves of two-piccc portable VCRs. Now that camcorders have replaced the two-piece market, separate tuners are harder to find, and often aren't much cheaper than inexpensive VCRs. Unless you can find a good deal on an old tuner (that provides RF output as well as scparate audio/video), you may be better off buying an ordinary VCR and using its tuner to feed your monitor. The added benefit, of course, is that you can watch videotapes on the same monitor.

#### A compact deck?

I've been waiting for a VHS-Compact player so I can replace the Mickey Mouse adapter that came with my VHS-C camcorder and play the tapes directly. It would be nice if it had digital special effects and editing fea-

Video Magazine welcomes your questions. Please include a phone number, but not a return envelope as the volume of mail does not permit replies. All letters may be edited for clarity and space. Address queries to Q & A, Video Magazine, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001.

tures for making copies onto full-size VHS machines, as well as a cordless remote control. Will such a machine be marketed soon? L. W. Harvey Nuevo, Calif.

Ironically, the player you're looking for may have already come and gone. Before VHS-C was a camcorder format (starting in 1984, when JVC's GR-Cl appeared), it was a portable VCR format that debuted in 1982. For a couple of years, several companies—including JVC, Panasonic and Sharp—sold VHS-C recorders, some with wired remote controls. They're all discontinued now, but if you can find a used one in good condition (check out swap shops, industrial video stores and classified ads) it would make an ideal player for your camcorder tapes.

Failing this, I suspect some version of the machine you're looking for will appear within the next year or so. JVC, which has great faith in the VHS-C format, is planning to make its VHS-C line more competitive with 8mm in the new "personal video" field. Plans are underway for miniature players with LCD screens, as well as two-hour VHS-C tapes. Meanwhile, multi-head VHS-C camcorders with flying erase heads and hi-fi sound are already on the Japanese market and will be introduced to the U.S. market later this year.

#### Rewind crisis

I regularly use a videocassette rewinder and stop the rewind cycle before the tape is completely rewound to prevent the tapc leader from snapping away from the reel hub. Unfortunately, I forgot to stop it in time on a few occasions and disaster struck - the tape snapped off. Is there a service that repairs broken videocassettes?

Charles M. Meeds San Diego, Calif.

To my knowledge, the National Video Cassette Servicc is the only company in the business of repairing both audio and videocassettcs, regardless of format. Contact them at 6753 Santa Monica Boulevard, Hollywood, CA 90038.

#### Pin patterns

I need to know the pin outputs of the Y/C connectors for Super VHS camcorders and VCRs. These pins carry luminance and chrominance information as separate signals, but which signals are on what pins?

Bob McCaffery Houston, Tex.

While there are four pins on each connector (for Y/C input jacks and Y/C output jacks), only two signals and their respective ground contacts are carried. On any Y/C jack, with the opening for the plastic guide "lug" facing down, the two pins on bottom are numbered 1 and 2. Pin 1 is the luminance ground pin and is on the right. Pin 2 on the left is the chrominance ground. The pin just above pin 1 (also on the right) is pin 3 and carries the luminance input or output signal (depending on the jack). Pin 4, at the top left, carries the chrominance input or output.

Many industrial S-VHS decks use a more elaborate seven-pin jack that carries an additional dubbing control signal with its corresponding ground. There has also been talk that a newer, multipin S-VHS connector may be available on future VCRs and camcorders. This would carry stereo audio signals along

with the Y/C signals.

#### Tape rejection

Occasionally, my VCR rejects some of my VHS cassettes. Instead of threading the tape in play or record, the cassette jumps back out the cassette door. What could be causing this?

Steven Becker Baltimore, Md.

The lugs molded into the bottom of the reels might not be meshing with the lugs molded into the reel tables inside the VCR. This is rare, but it can happen, and most VCRs are automatic enough to eject the cassette rather than risk jamming the VCR. Another possibility is that some of your cassettes have too much clear leader at the head, and it runs the full distance between the supply and take-up spools. Many inexpensive rewinders wind the tape right back to this transparent leader and only stop rewinding when the tape stops moving. Better designs rely on the same photoelectric sensing principle as the VCR. The clear leader signals the VCR's sensors to stop the tape motion. Unfortunately, if the clear leader covers both sensors at the same time, the VCR thinks there's no tape at all, and ejects the cassette. The cure is simple: stick a finger into the core of the take-up spool and wind a few turns until the tape emerges from the supply reel.

#### Shell switching

Sometime ago, you printed a letter from a reader looking for a "one-time-use" adapter for Compact VHS tapes. I want to know if you have found any and to offer a suggestion. Once a VHS-C tape has been recorded on, and you have no intention of erasing it, why not just transfer the tape into a full-size VHS shell? The shell shouldn't cost that much.

David Andrews

Vancouver, B.C., Canada

No "one shot" VHS-C adapters have appeared yet and I don't know of any company working on one. Your idea, however, is a good one and perhaps some enterprising company will sell a kit that lets you swap the tape from a VHS-C cassette to a full-size shell.

Without such a kit, you would have to splice the tape onto the larger reels, since VHS-C shells contain only one small supply reel that could get lost inside the larger shell, while the special take-up spool (the part with the geared teeth) has no reel socket. For those who may want to try this, empty VHS shells are available from several sources, including Multi-Video of Charlotte, North Carolina (800-229-0111). Ten empty shells cost \$21, plus shipping. Or you can just buy a \$2 T-120, ditch the blank tape and load up the VHS-C tape of your kid's birthday party.

#### The deck stops here

When will I be able to buy an adapter that will let me play back Super VHS tapes on a regular VHS deck?

Mike Sheffield San Francisco, Calif.

S-VHS and VHS are electronically incompatible in this respect. An S-VHS VCR can record and play both in HQ and S-VHS modes, but a VHS deck can't play S-VHS tapes. The picture will appear bright and streaky, with a lot of noise. If you're recording S-VHS tapes and want to give a tape to a friend who doesn't have S-VHS, you'll have to make a copy of your original. S-VHS can be copied to VHS or any other tape format, but the direct playability of an original cassette depends on the electronic parameters of the VCR you put it in, and there are no "adapters" that will let VHS decks play back S-VHS tapes.



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EDITED BY LOU KESTEN



#### Tera debuts 31-inch monitor/receiver

Tera's Model 633 31-inch monitor/receiver features circuitry that enhances outlines, edges and detail while reducing snow and other artifacts. It also uses scanning velocity modulation, black level extension, gray scale compensation, minimum overscan, dynamic focus and a comb filter. A side panel has three sets of audio/video inputs and outputs and a set for connection to Super VHS or ED Beta VCRs.

The 633's audio highlights include a wireless infrared headphone set, MTS, SAP and an AM/FM frequency synthesis tuner with six AM and 18 FM station presets. Two 35-watt-per-channel amplifiers drive full-range speakers; a separate amp powers subwoofers.

VMS-8100A

Price: not available.

For additional Information, circle No. 151 on Reader Service Card.

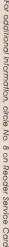
#### Hitachi adds S-VHS camcorders

Hitachi's VMS-8100A HPX and VMS-6100A Super VHS camcorders contain high-speed shutters and 390,000-pixel MOS image sensors. Automatic functions in both models include focus, white balance, iris and date/time recording.

The 8100's Accushot circuitry automatically adjusts the iris and variablespeed shutter for the best picture exposure. Automatic flicker compensation reduces the pulsating effect of fluorescent lighting. The 8100 also features digital still and strobe and low light sensitivity to one lux.

Prices: VMS-8100A, \$2,100; VMS-6100A, not available.

For odditional information, circle no. 152 on Reoder Service Cord.



ates a 420,000-pixel 2/3- inch CCD image sensor that records in

light as low as five lux.

Automatic functions offered by this ultra-lightweight, top-of-the-line camcorder include through-the-lens focusing (with manual override), white balance, and iris. The combined 6x power zoom f/l.6 lens can focus down to under an inch in macro mode.

Other highlights include a variable position viewfinder, a multi-function LCD panel, date/time recording, edit search and an edit switch.

Price: \$1,899.

For additional information, círcie na. 153 on Reader Service Cord.



Hitachi's HPX VT-3800 Super VHS VCR features a flying erase head, digital picture-in-picture, 12-screen multi-strobe and multi-still, slow motion, freeze frame, mosaic and painting. Scana-lock tuning stores VHF, UHF and 85 cable channels in memory, and the eight-event/one-year timer can be programmed from the remote using onscreen displays. Other highlights include MTS, high-speed search, index search and 30-second skip.

Price: \$1,299.



#### NEC TV includes surround sound

NEC's KX-2792S 27-inch TV provides three surround sound effects: hall, matrix and Dolby. A 40-watt amplifier powers four stereo speakers in the console, and the set decodes MTS and SAP. The TV produces more than 500 lines of horizontal resolution and has an S-video input, and special circuitry enhances color contrast, gray differentiation and white balance.

A built-in VCR basc swivels. Other highlights include parental channel lock and a sleep timer that can be set to turn off the TV after up to 180 minutes.

Price: \$1,599.



Far additional information, circle no. 155 on Reader Service Card.

VIDEO TIPS
by Michael X, Barr

y Michael X. Barr

MORE POWER TO YOU

There's the pitch ... swing ... and it's a long drive straight toward the center-fielder — your kid! You zoom in on him (or her) with your camcorder. And it happens. Suddenly, the camcorder's completely dead. But why? What happened?

You made an error.

You didn't have enough battery power. You had the right tape — a 120-minute length. But what good is a two-hour cassette when your camcorder battery dies after one hour?

I can't count how many times I've heard stories exactly like this one. And I always have the same response: "There's only one solution — a special long-playing camcorder battery."

One of the best I've ever seen is the Long Play Rechargeable Battery (model AV046) from RCA Accessories. It's a dependable, portable power source that's easy to carry wherever and whenever you're shooting video movies. Simply plug it into your camcorder and this RCA Long Play Battery provides dramatically extended time for virtually any camcorder. Much greater than the type that usually hooks on the back of the camcorder itself.

Made with a high-caliber nickel-cadmium composition, the RCA Long Play Battery provides significantly more power per pound than other batteries comprised of a lead-acid composition. At the same time, the nickel-cadmium RCA battery has a longer usable life—and can be recharged more times than lead-acid batteries!

As an important added boon, the RCA Long Play Battery can also be used to power other key video movie-making accessories, such as portable TVs and VCRs, and it's a "must" if you use a video light, such as RCA VDC050, with your camcorder.

In short, the RCA Long Play Battery is a personal power station, designed expressly for home video use.

See your RCA video dealer for accessories that will go a long way to adding a touch of professionalism to your home movies. Or, for a free colorful brochure, write: RCA, Sales Promotion Services, Dept. B, Deptford, NJ 08096.

RСЛ



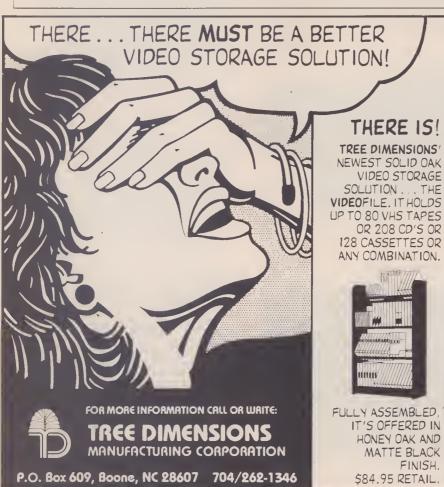


#### Sharp camcorder includes 12x zoom

Sharp's VL-L250 full-size VHS camcorder incorporates a 12x variable-speed power zoom lens. It also offers a high-speed 1/1000-second shutter, a half-inch CCD image sensor, a self-timer and automatic focus, iris and white balance.

Price: \$2,000.

For additional information, circle No. 156 on Reader Service Cord.



#### Emerson TV boasts MTS, PIP

Emerson's TS4650D 27-inch TV incorporates two tuners and digital circuitry for digital picture-in-picture. The eightinch insert picture can be frozen, moved to any corner or swapped with the main picture.

Other highlights include 500 lines of horizontal resolution, an S-video input, frequency synthesis tuning, MTS/SAP reception with noise reduction and a sleep timer. Onscreen displays show time, channel, volume and sharpness.

Price: \$1,000.



For additional information, circle no. 157 on Reader Service Cord.

#### NEC introduces S-VHS camcorder

NEC's VS60U Super VHS camcorder includes a 10x power zoom lens and dual flying erase heads. The high-speed shutter has settings of 1/250, 1/500 and 1/1000-second, while the CCD image sensor records in light as low as 10 lux. Other highlights include video insert, audio dubbing and automatic date recording.

Price: \$2,399.



For additional Information, circle No. 158 on Reader Service Cord.

#### Spectralstar debuts lens attachments

Spectralstar has introduced a collection of 11 lens attachments for camcorders. Telephoto lenses expand the capability of a zoom lens by 1.5x, 1.7x, 2x. 2.5x or 3.5x. Wide angle lenses increase the field of view by .5x, .58x or .6x. The Super Wide Semi-Fisheye lens dramatically widens the angle of view, while the Hemispheric attachment triples picture area with no distortion. The Slide Copier lets users transfer slides to videotape and has a rotating stage and close-up optics for viewing details on a slide.

Price: not available.



For additional information, circle no. 159 on Reader Service Card



#### Sony debuts still video camera

Sony's Mavica MVC-C1 still video camera records images electronically on reusable two-inch discs. The camera weighs just one pound, and each floppy disc can store up to 50 images. Pictures can be played back on any TV through the MAP-T1 adapter.

The Mavica offers up to 300 lines of resolution, and its 15 mm f/2.8 fixed-focus lens records subjects from 1.5 meters to infinity. High-speed still-image recording captures four or nine pictures a second. Automatic functions include iris, shutter speed, strobe (for low light conditions) and "blank search," which advances to the next blank frame on a disc.

Prices: MVC-C1, \$650; MAP-T1, \$250.

For additional information, circle No. 160 on Reader Service Cord.



## Alinin INPI

## Video sound solution: powered speakers

#### BY IVAN BERGER

Television sets rarely have good speakers. Including them would make the scts too bulky and expensive for most buyers, and people who care about sound usually want to pick speakers that suit their own tastes. Sometimes, manufacturers who care about good sound build in decent-sized amplifiers to drive external speakers, but usually they just provide output jacks to feed audio signals to a stereo system. After all, the logic goes, if you care about good sound, you probably have a system whose amps are more powerful and whose speakers are far better than those a TV manufacturer could reasonably provide.

But what if you don't have a powerful stereo system, or your audio and video setups arc in separate rooms? And how do you provide enough amps and speakers for surround sound without surrounding your house with bill collectors? Self-powered speakers, with amplifiers built in, provide one answer to both

problems.

By building the amp and speaker as a system, the manufacturer can match the two for optimum performance. The amp can drive the speaker to full volume without distortion, and you don't pay for excess power the speaker won't let you use or hear distortion from an amp that isn't powerful enough. The amp's frequency response can be shaped to compensate for problems in the speaker's response (virtually all speakers have such problems), and the amp's maximum power can be limited at frequencies which the speaker might have trouble handling without distortion. Makers of expensive powered speakers often build in separate amps for the woofer, midrange and tweeter, with electronic crossovers to divide the frequencies between the amps. And all this frequently costs less than equivalent separate pieces.

Ivan Berger is Technical Editor of Audio Magazine and co-author of The New Sound of Sterco (Plume).

The Acoustic Research TSW 115P is a case in point. For \$400 per pair, it includes two speakers plus an amplifier that delivers 16 watts per channel at well under one percent distortion. The two-way speakers, magnetically shielded for video use, have four-inch woofers and 3/4-inch dome tweeters. Such small speakers usually lose bass rapidly below about 100 Hertz. AR compensates by boosting the amplifier's response at about 80 Hz. Having the amp's output rise at a point at which the speaker's output is falling off extends the total output so that the speaker works well down to about 50 Hz. Below 50 Hz, the amp's response is tailored the other way, rapidly cutting off the lowest frequencies to limit the speaker's diet to what it can digest. Overall, the bass response is very respectable for small speakers.

And they are small. The cabinets measure only 10-1/2 inches high, 7-1/8 inches wide and 6-7/8 inches deep. From the front, both cabinets look alike, with black snap-off grilles, sides covered in black vinyl, and solid oak or walnut

tops and bottoms.

The two speakers look different from the rear. The back of the main speaker, which contains the amplifiers for both channels, has three connections: the permanently attached power cord, a 3.5 mm stereo input jack and a European-style speaker output jack. A rocker switch turns the amp on and off. A green pilot light on the front shows when the amp is on. Two small, concentric controls adjust the audio level.

The back of the other speaker has only a permanently attached two-wire cord, about ten feet long, that runs to the output jack on the main speaker. The plug and jack only fit together one way, so there's no chance of connecting one speaker in opposite polarity to the other. (Polarity errors, commonly made when connecting separate amps and speakers, don't damage them but lead to a loss of bass and a wandering stereo im-

The cable that connects to the TV or other signal source is about 11 fcet long, with a 3.5 mm stereo plug on the speaker end and two standard RCA phono plugs at the other. The level controls on the back of the main speaker are used to match the speakers' sensitivity to the signal you're feeding it. You want to find a setting high chough to drive the speakers to full volume when you turn the TV's volume up all the way, but



A Pair of Aces: Acoustic Research's TSW 115P includes two speakers and a 16-watt-per-channel amplifier.

low enough so the speakers don't start blasting while the TV's volume eontrol is at its lowest setting.

If your room layout makes one speaker sound louder than the other, you can balance the sound by adjusting one of the level controls. If the video device connected to the AR system has no volume control, you can adjust the volume with the AR's controls, but since they're on the back of the speaker this can be awkward.

I've enjoyed the sound of the TSW 115P eonsistently with my TV. Voices, sound effects and background music are always elean and natural, especially if the speakers are flush against the wall. If you're an MTV fan, you won't be overwhelmed by the bass, but you won't imagine that the bass and keyboard players took the day off, either. On some organ CDs with very low bass notes, there was some loss, thanks to the amplifier's low-end eutoff.

There is a slight overemphasis on some very high frequencies. It never affects speaking voices or male singers but does add an oceasional extra crispness to female vocals and makes applause sound somewhat metallic.

Stereo perspective is reasonably deep and natural, especially with the speakers toed in a bit to face the listener. As with any speaker, perspective is not especially sharp or clear with most TV programs or pop-music videos, but that's a result of the way such recordings are mixed

The AR TSW 115P solves a real problem for many videophiles—and for musie-lovers who want a super-simple system to use with a single source, such as a portable CD player. It's not intended to take the place of an audiophile's main speakers and high-powered amps, but it isn't priced like them, either. All in all, the AR TSW 115P is a nice piece of work.

#### TECH TIP

#### Solving reception flaws

If your broadeast reception isn't all it should be, try replacing the wire running from the antenna to the TV. If you're using unshielded wire (RG-59/U), move up to aluminum-shielded wire (RG-6). Your reception may be perfectly good, but a good signal ean't travel far through cheap, unshielded wire without running into problems. If replacing the wiring doesn't significantly improve reception, try an amplifier—preferably an adjust-

able one, since too much amplification ean overload a system. If you're splitting the signal among several sets, you probably need an amplifier. You'd also be well-advised not to use the cheapest splitters, which degrade signals—especially higher-frequency eable bands.

If you're a cable subscriber, you probably already have shielded eable in your home and your signal problems may originate at the "head end"—the

eable eompany itself. Don't be shy about eomplaining about shoddy signals. Apartment dwellers should eheck stairwells for cable-eompany splitters with uncapped outlets, each of which is like a mini-broadcast antenna emitting signal impurities. Leaving splitters uneapped is against the rules. Complain immediately and, if the eable operator takes no aetion, eomplain to the Federal Communications Commission.



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For additional information, circle No. 14 on Reader Service Card

## **VIDEOTESTS**



Big-Screen Beauty: Mitsubishi's CK-3514R 35-inch TV features digital picture-in-picture and strobe.

#### Mitsubishi CK-3514R Monitor/Receiver

DATA

Suggested Price: \$3,200

Weight: 260 pounds

Dimensions (h/w/d): 44-3/4 x 38-3/8 x 25 inches

Power Requirements: 120 VAC, 60 Hz

Power Consumption: 210 W

Screen Size: 35 inches (measured diagonally) Speaker Size: one 4x6-inch woofer and one 1-1/2-inch tweeter per channel

Type of Tuning: frequency synthesis

Method of Tuning: up/down programmable scan on set; scan plus direct access on remote

Broadcast Tuning Range: 2 to 13, 14 to 69

Cable Tuning Range: 2 to 13, 5A, A-5 to A-1, A to I, J to W, W+1 to W+58, W+59 to W+84 buttons for power, VCR/TV, channel up/down, volume up/down, mute, last channel recall, audio, adjust, video, input and illuminate buttons; in compartment—buttons shared with compatible VCRs for pause/digital effects, menu, enter, display, off timer/OTR,

Remote Control:

iR, with exposed

shared with compatible VCRs for pause/ digital effects, menu, enter, display, off timer/OTR, exchange, PIP and source; plus VCR buttons—record, stop, play, fast forward/ search, rewind/search slow/frame advance, +

and -

RF Inputs: 2

Video/Stereo Audio Inputs:

3—one with S-video, two with standard video connectors

ute to picture quality.

VIDEOTEST NUMBER 480

monitor/receiver

Mitsubishi 35-inch

The third generation of Mitsubishi 35inch TVs incorporates many basic design improvements that enhance picture quality. The three current models differ primarily in cabinetry; we chose to review the CK-3514R, a vertical console. Brightness of the 35-inch tube has been increased with a high-current scandium oxide cathode. With large aperture multi-step focus, dynamic beam forming and added focus coils, the sets produce a tightly focused high-resolution image. While velocity scan modulation and horizontal image delineation enhance contrast, detail and video noise reduction, a comb filter, a notch filter and digital sync generation also contrib-

Digital effects new to this generation include picture-in-picture positionable in any quadrant, multi-screen scan of active channels in four windows and sequential frame stepping (strobe) through the four picture insets. There are two RF inputs and three audio/video inputs, one of which is dedicated to Y/C video. Besides the monitor output, which carries the signal being watched, there's also a tuner output. The only weakness, endemic to all large direct-

view sets, is sensitivity to the Earth's

S-Video input: external 1

Video/Stereo Audio
Output:
1--monitor with

switchable fixed/variable audio

External Speaker Connectors: no, but internal speakers may be switched off Internal Audio Amplifier Power: 10 watts/channel

Other Features: MTS, SAP, video/stereo audio tuner output

Absent Features: auxilliary stereo audio output, headphone jack

Accessories: remote control with batteries

**RESULTS** 

Horiz. Resolution: rated and verified—560 lines

IDEOTEST PHOTOS: LES MORSILLO

magnetic field. A few compensating switches must be used when installing or repositioning the set.

Description. The CK-3514R is compact for a 35-inch direct view because it is designed in a vertical format with the speakers located below the tube. The cabinet is oak vencer with a black bezel and grille cloth. Although there are no exposed controls, part of the bezel opens to reveal buttons for master power, power, mutc, display, TV/ cable, auto program, add, crasc and up/ down pairs for volume, channel, input, vidco, audio and adjust.

There is also a rotary control for vertical hold. A plastic protector hides a degauss button and slide switches which compensate for the strength and direction of the Earth's magnetic field. Indicators for power and auto-on, plus an infrared remote sensor are exposed to the left of the compartment.

The rear has a small bulge (to protect the back of the picture tube), the power cord and a well organized jack field. At left arc two F connectors for antennas A and B. Either accepts a full range of broadcast or cable inputs, so a signal combiner is needed if you have both VHF and UHF antennas.

Three A/V inputs arc organized in columns and labeled Ext 1 to 3. The first has only an S-video connector associated with its stereo audio jacks. The other two have only video connectors corresponding to the stereo jacks. The next column of video and stcreo audio continued on page 83

Snowiness; S/N, Luminance: 53.6 dB

Chroma AM S/N: 61 4 dB

Chroma PM S/N: 61.2 dB

Accuracy of Colors: very good

Audio Frequency Response: 55 Hz-16 kHz, -3 dB

Audio S/N: 61 dB, RF in; 75 dB, AV in

**Total Harmonic** Distortion: less than 1%

RATINGS

Picture Quality: excellent

Audio Performance: very good

Operational Ease: very good/excellent

Overall Performance: excellent for 35-inch direct view



VIDEOTEST NUMBER 481

#### IVC VHS-C camcorder

JVC's GR-A30U Compact VHS camcorder is almost as easy to use as a onebutton still camera. It may not have all the features we usually tout, but it delivers creditable pictures with little fuss.

Almost everything about it is automatic, including focus, white balance and iris. The autofocus system focuses on anything in the target zone from infinity to the front of the lens, although a few subjects can give it a little trouble. There is no focus ring but you can lock the autofocus mechanism in any posi-

A 1/1000-second shutter speed freczes fast action, but you need quite a bit of light to get the best quality picture out of the fast speed. Other camera options include SP/EP recording speeds, a time/date/age imprinter and an alarm that beeps each time the run/pause button is pressed. The camcorder may also be used as a camera with a VCR.

The recording section offers playback with pause/still and search, which work best at the EP speed for which the recorder is optimized. A flying erase head helps to make glitch-free assemble and insert edits. A host of supplied and optional accessories make the GR-A30U relatively flexible.

Description. The GR-A30U is a chunky but light handful that weighs 2.5

side of the lens projection are buttons for focus lock, shutter speed and display on/off. The cassette hatch is near the back. The battery slides into a slot on the right to become part of the grip. Atop the grip are the zoom rocker and a drawer for the clock battery.

At the grip's back are a red run/ pause button and a tiny slide switch that enables or disables an alarm that beeps quietly each time run/pause is pushed. Above is a multi-pin audio/video output jack and below is a concentric jack for an external 9.6-volt DC supply. A microphone projects alongside the lens, with a stiff wire protecting its outer side. There are jacks for an external mic and earphone.

The rear hosts the power and SP/EP switches and the cassette eject button. Part of the panel slides upward to reveal playback buttons for stop, play, fast forward (search), rewind (search) and pause (still), as well as three buttons to set the display: mode, select and set. The mode button determines whether time, date or age is recordable.

The front of the ridge atop the camcorder slides off to reveal an accessory shoe. A rubber viewing hood for the electronic viewfinder projects from the rear with the diopter adjustment on its underside. On the bottom panel are the tripod socket and a tracking control.

**Operation.** Using the GR-A30U is very simple because it has so few controls. When a battery is installed, the cassette hatch may be opened whether or not power is on. If the camera/dcck continued on page 88

## **VIDEOTESTS**



#### VIDEOTEST NUMBER 482

## RCA Pro Edit VHS camcorder

When RCA dubbed its new CC320 camcorder Pro Edit, we assumed it would have a built-in editing controller. Although it doesn't, it does have so many features that reduce the need for post-production that we weren't disappointed. A flying erase head allows clean insert edits; the fact that VCR controls are always live means easy and quick transit to desired points for insert edits, video dubs and audio dubs—without leaving camera mode. Thus, a lot of cleanup and tightening can be done without going to another generation.

To fully utilize these capabilities you must discipline yourself not to overshoot; pre-production planning to leave correct space for inserts and a good idea of what you want to show before you start shooting are essential. Since you can always do post-production to correct flubs, this machine offers the best of both editing worlds.

The CC320's features also include all the usual automatic circuitry (with manual override) plus auto shutter speed, which selects the best compro-

mise between iris and shutter speed up to 1/200-second while in auto shutter and gives a manual choice of 1/120, 1/250, 1/1000 and 1/2000 for stopping fast action.

Other goodies include an 8x zoom, time-lapse shooting, animation with switchable single frame recording, positive/negative recording, a self-timer, fading, a titler, a full-sized head drum with separate pairs of heads optimized for SP and EP, a built-in speaker positioned so you can hear while you shoot and a switchable wind noise filter.

**Description.** The CC320 is styled in two shades of gray, with black accents. It is one of the lightest full-size VHS camcorders (six pounds without battery or cassette) and fits comfortably on your shoulder because of an indent at the back of the base. Most controls are in conventional places.

The lens barrel has manual zoom and focus rings with a release on the zoom lever to enter macro range. The AF sensor window is at the front of the lens support; the left side has the AF auto/manual switch, with one-shot capability if its slider is pressed while in manual

Three columns of camera controls are further back on the left side. An auto/manual/off switch and a speed selector button for the high-speed shutter

are at top. At bottom, a rotary manual color balance dial sits forward of the auto/manual white balance switch.

Between these are the iris dial (auto at center detent) and a hold-down-type fade-to/from-black button. The last column contains, top to bottom, a self timer, display, reset/T-160 (with indicator), date/time, review and index.

A sliding panel hides the titler controls: buttons for edit/on/off, page, color, size and delete. Above are buttons for

(pre-programmed) word and shift and four arrow-shaped cursor controls. The remaining rotary control cycles through the characters, numbers, punctuation and symbols in about four turns, much faster than forward/reverse buttons.

A second compartment below the exposed controls contains a slide switch for negative/positive images and buttons for time lapse, clock select and clock advance. High on that side (so it sits near your ear) is a tiny speaker to monitor sound while shooting or playing back. An earphone jack is also provided.

Atop the body is a balanced carrying handle with accessory shoe. Alongside the handle is a power control (with indicator), a camera/playback switch and buttons for eject, rewind/search, play, fast forward/search, stop, pause and audio and video dub. A tracking control and earphone jack are behind the handle with the battery release. The electronic viewfinder is at the front of the body on a double extension that accommodates viewing with either eye.

At the front is a tally light and fixed microphone, with a wind noise switch underneath and a jack for an external microphone on the right side. The left side has a viewing hood that rotates from straight down to straight up. The magnifier is focused by a convenient thumbwheel. The back has grooves for the main battery (the DC power jack is covered when a battery is in position) and a compartment below it for the clock battery and the multi-pin audio/video out connector.

The bottom has the tripod socket, a slot for stowing the lens cap and a depression near the rear with a switch for

continued on page 86



Snazzy Surround: The Lexicon CP-1 decoder offers crisp, pure separation of front, rear and center-channel surround sound signals.

#### VIDEOTEST NUMBER 483

## Lexicon digital audio processor

Lexicon's CP-1 Digital Audio Environment Processor is one of a few video sound decoders to offer Dolby Pro Logic decoding for Dolby Surround-encoded videotapes. It can, therefore, credibly simulate the sonic experience of a performance in a concert hall or movie theater. But the unit's applications extend far beyond conventional decoding: proprietary all-digital signal processing can recreate and/or synthesize ambience and reverberation for audio recordings. It can feed line-level signals to front, side and rear stereo channels plus mono center and subwoofer channels. Although Lexicon stresses the importance of side

speakers for a full spatial impression, the CP-1 can convey a similar effect with front speakers alone. Multiple speaker placement patterns are pre-programmed and selectable from the remote.

The CP-1 uses two methods of spatial impression – ambience extraction and ambience generation - in four basic modes to simulate reality; each mode has three factory presets to emulate different environments. You may modify the presets without memorizing them, or you may create new environments and store them in 12 user memories, for a total of 24 presets. The four basic modes are panorama (with presets for normal, wide and binaural), ambience (small, medium and large halls), reverb (small, medium and large halls) and surround (mono, stereo and Dolby Pro Logic). Panorama extracts the natural ambience in music, without adding anything, to produce a feeling of greater width,

depth and spaciousness. It requires only. two front speakers but uses rear speakers, too. Ambience generates the appropriate early reflections to simulate six different hall types - rectangular and fan-shaped halls, each in small, medium and large sizes, using front, side and rear speakers. (It can also create such simulations using only the two front speakers.) The reverb option does not simulate early reflections like ambience does but emphasizes the reverberant decay of small, medium or large spaces. The surround options are mono (which sends music and effects to side and rear speakers while keeping dialogue in the center channel), stereo (primarily for playing music in a system with speaker placement optimized for films) and Pro Logic (an all-digital implementation of the Dolby Pro Logic Surround decoding process, which uses steering logic to recontinued on page 104

#### Lexicon Pro Logic Surround Decoder



#### DATA

Manufacturer: Lexicon, Inc., 100 Beaver St., Waltham, MA 02154; (617) 891-6790

Suggested Price: \$1,295

Welght: 11 pounds

Dimensions (h/w/d): 2-1/2 x 17 x 12-1/2

Power Requirements: 120 VAC, 50/60 Hz

Power Consumption: 30 W

#### Stereo Audio Inputs: 3—line 1, line 2 and

tape in

Input Impedance: 50 kohms

Minimum Input Level: 300 mV, RMS

Stereo Audio Outputs: 4—main, rear, side and tape out

Mono Audio Outputs: 2—sub-woofer and center

Output Impedance: 500 ohms

#### Maximum Output Level: 4 V, RMS

Remote Control:
IR wireless with buttons for volume up and down, effect up and down, balance left and right, balance front and back, environments 1 through 12, bank, parameter and parameter up and down

Accessories: supplied—remote control; optional—rack mount adapter

#### RESULTS

Audio Frequency Response: unprocessed channels—10 Hz-100 kHz, +1/-3 dB rated; 10 Hz-50 kHz, +1/-3 dB measured; processed channels— 10 Hz-16 kHz, +1/-3 dB, rated and measured

Audio S/N, A-Weighted: 85 dB min., rated; 86 dB, measured

Total Harmonic
Distortion (1 kHz, max level):
front—less than .03%

rated and measured; center and sides—less than .02% rated and measured; rear—less than .05%

Total Harmonic Distortion (10-100 Hz): subwoofer—less than 0.01%, rated; verified to less than our 0.02% measurement limitation

#### RATINGS

Audio Performance: excellent

Operational Ease: excellent

Overall Performance: excellent



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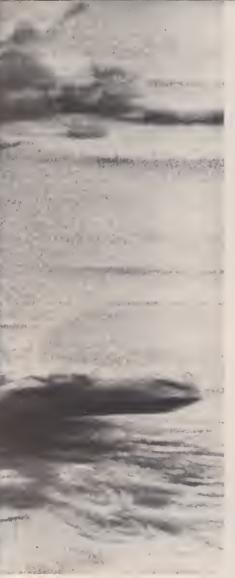
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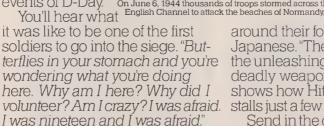
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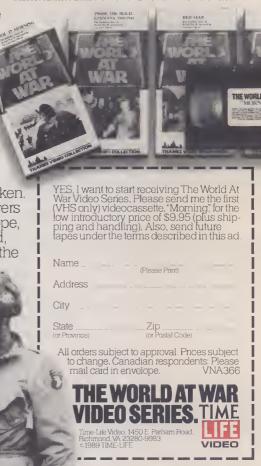
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## SHOOT & EDIT LIKE A PR

A special section on home video production accessories.

CRs, TVs and, lately, camcorders have opened new worlds to anyone able to tap their creative powers. But there's no longer any need, short of cost or style, to practice video minimalism. Whether you're shooting a family birthday party or recording a business event, the video culture has spawned an awesome array of shooting and editing accessories to help you get the job done right and grab your audience's interest.

Some of these video accessories have been adapted from film photography. Others have features denied even to professionals not very long ago. Space limitations usually keep us from covering these devices in the detail we'd like, but this month we bring you a trio of product-packed features designed to help you shoot and edit better home videos.

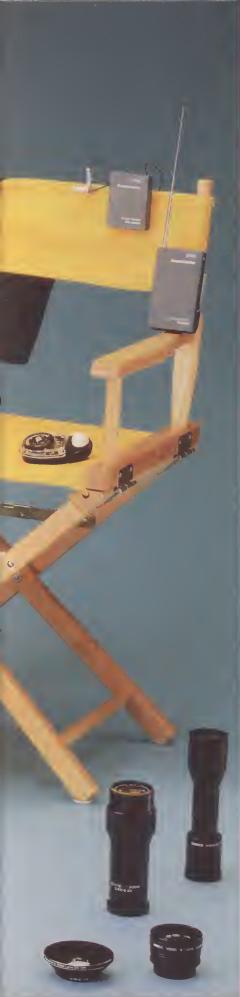
The limitless range of video accessories prompts us to remind readers to check the compatibility of equipment to be linked before they buy. Not all gear, especially editing equipment, works equally well with all camcorders or decks, despite some manufacturers' assurances to the contrary. So make sure any accessory you want suits the equipment you have or plan to acquire - and get the retailer's written guarantee that you'll get your money back on gear that doesn't.

"The Compleat Camcorder" by George Schaub spotlights the dizzying variety of shooting aids available for camcorders. Lens extenders, fil-

ters, tripods, batteries, bags and a cornucopia of other gadgets can make shooting more fun and less tedious - and your videos more interesting.







# THE COMPLEAT CAMCORDER

A shooter's guide to lenses, lights, mics, batteries, tripods, bags, filters & more.

You may think your camcorder has everything you need for making top-quality videos. After all, today's models record in very dim light and have high-power zooms, variable shutter speeds and digital special effects. The most feature-laden camcorder, however, can use a helping hand, and many manufacturers offer a variety of camcorder accessories. These include battery packs to extend taping time, cordless lights, tripods and monopods to steady shots, lenses to extend shooting range, filters for special effects, on- and off-camera mics and designer bags to tote your gear around. Here's a sampler of the best.

#### LIGHTS

Now that most camcorders record in light as low as 10 lux, you might question the need for accessory lighting. Yet often the images recorded are noisy (grainy), with poor colors. Using lights that need an umbilical cord to a wall outlet defeats the shooting freedom that makes camcorders so appealing.

One solution is the battery-incorporated light. Although it provides less illumination than one that draws AC power, it may make the difference between marginal and good pictures. One such unit is the 12.5-ounce Vertex SC Video light, which attaches to a camcorder's accessory shoe. Though its quartz-halogen lamp supplies only 15 watts of illumination, a new reflector is claimed to boost performance to 50 watts. Within the unit is a rechargeable nickel-cadmium (NiCad) battery. Each charge lasts about 25 minutes.

You can also carry power for lighting around with you. The Vertex PB's minibattery pack weighs 20 ounces and measures only five by three by 1.5 inches. When fully charged, its 25-watt lamp gives 100 watts of illumination, thanks to that same high-efficiency reflector. A variation on this theme is found in the Asahi M-35 light—its battery pack screws into the tripod socket at the base of the camcorder.

If you want to light an entire room, select a unit that works off AC. The Ambico Indoor Expert Video Light, for example, is compact enough to mount on a camcorder, yet it can also be placed on a tripod or light stand for dramatic effects. The unit supplies 250 watts of illumination, probably all you'll need for anything but full-blown video productions, and has "barn doors" to control and focus the light. Although higher-power lamps burn hotter, the Ambico Indoor Expert, with its vented helmet-shaped housing, mesh grill and heat-absorbing glass shield, is cooler and safer to operate.

The newest lights operate from either AC or DC power using the same lamp.

George Schaub is Executive Editor of Poplular Photography.

### **CAMCORDERS**

The Ambieo Extended Play Power and Light Set, for example, yields 100 watts of power on AC or 50 watts on a rechargeable gel-eell battery. The battery is claimed to run the light for up to 80 minutes and can power a camcorder

for up to five hours.

Lamps generally put out a constant stream of light, while the camcorder's auto exposure system handles the exposure controls. But one high-tech light, the Hama Magnum 300, contains a sensor that measures the amount of light reflected from a subject up to ten feet away and adjusts the brightness accordingly, maintaining a constant color temperature even when it dims.

An adjustable housing from Hahnel, the Zoom Light, permits movement of the video lamp from flood to spot eoverage, which is handy for eustomizing lighting to fit the zoom position on your lens. Hahnel also offers an attachment for creating a true "spot" effect, which is great for lighting a tiny portion of the

seene.

#### TRIPODS AND SUPPORTS

What makes a *video* tripod? Weight and design for starters. Tripods built for small still earner may be too light to give earneorders proper support.

Sceond in importance is the platform or "head" that connects the camcorder to the tripod. The best, "panning and tilting" heads, allow considerable shooting freedom; more expensive "fluid" panning heads are even better, allowing you to follow action with ease. Panning heads have a vertical handle or handles protruding from the base—you control the up, down and side-to-side movement of the camcorder with one hand while operating the controls with the other.

Another steadying option is a videodedicated monopod or unipod, a onelegged telescoping device with an adjustable pan head. Though monopods don't guarantee steadiness, they are better to use than hands alone and easier to carry than their three-legged cousins.

The E-Z-Pod from Slik is already set up for video. When the four rigid tubular leg sections are extended, the E-Z-Pod is 62 inches high. A push-button device at the top also gives a five-inch play in viewing height. The E-Z-Pod has

an adjustable pan head for tilt movement and a quick-release platform for instant eamcorder mounting and removal. Vanguard's MP12X, another monopod for video shooting, features a foot pedal to help keep it steady.

Another support alternative is the Bogen Video Camera Support, an adjustable brace that eradles the shoulders and waist and provides a (movable) ball head and quick release platform for eamcorder mounting. Though this lacks the stability of the gyroscope-controlled Steadieam body supports used by broadcast erews, it allows you to walk around with the eamcorder ready to shoot without always having to hold it on your shoulder.

#### LENSES AND FILTERS

Within the protective collar surrounding the front of your video lens are



Pods and Ends: Vanguard's MP12X (left) and Slik's E-Z-Pod monopods are designed for video shooting.

metal threads that are the base for numerous lens accessories, including filters for color enhancement and special effects, and optical devices that change the view and focusing capabilities of the prime lens.

The threads on the lens collar usually range from 42 to 55 mm in diameter. You must match the diameter of the thread to that on the accessory. Or you can buy a screw-in adapter that allows you to mount various filters in slots, or step-up or step-down rings that adapt various thread sizes to one another.

Thanks to the still eamera industry, there are hundreds of filters from which to choose, though not every one is optimized for use with video. Use any filter sparingly, however, as too many special effects ean get in the way of the sense of reality offered by videotape. You may, for example, want to enhance the colors of a sunset by adding a light yellow, red or orange filter, or add romance to a seene with a diffusion or fog filter. For a touch of glitter on Christmas decorations, or to add sparkle to the ehrome of a vintage ear, try a star or diffraction filter. Or, to add a bit of visual chaos to a seene, eonsider a multi-image or kaleidoscope attachment. For more information about filters, see the Tiffen Manufacturing Corporation's videotape, Which Filter Should I Use, available for \$25 plus postage and handling from Tiffen, 99 Oser Ave., Hauppauge, NY 11788 (516-273-2500).

Optical attachments that alter a camcorder's point of view include screwin elose-up lenses, reversible extenders that double for moderate expansion or magnification of the field of view and full tele-extenders for dramatic changes

in focal length.

If you want to shoot screen-filling flowers or make video copies of old photos, you might consider a set of closc up attachments, available in +1, +2 and +3 powers — the higher the number, the greater the magnification. These accessories can be combined for amazing effects, although image sharpness tends to diminish as you increase the magnification.

If your eamcorder has a 12x power zoom, a tele-extender might be overkill, unless you're tracking grizzlies in the wild. If you want a modest change in fo-

## Filters and lenses can add sparkle to ordinary video shots.

Got a Light?: Ambico's V-0860 Simple Wonder Power and Light Set runs off AC or a DC battery.



cal length, however, a 1.5x extender that doubles as a wide-angle extender can come in handy. These extenders, available from Ambico, Lenmar, Vertex, Vivitar and others, screw into the front of the lens and add 50 percent to your longest focal length. Mounted in reverse, they give a wide-angle view that's 0.6x of your lens' shortest focal length.

Adding focal length is an easy way to bring faraway subjects closer. But why would you want to expand the angle of view? Let's say you're shooting a birthday party in a small room and want to include all the action in the frame without panning. A wide-angle attachment might be the answer. Wide-angle settings can also be used for dramatic effects in landscapes, at sporting events or even when you're walking through a crowd. It gives your camcorder eye more peripheral vision.

If you want a really super telephoto lens, pick up a device that multiplies your lens' focal length. One such item is the Tokina 2.5x to 5x tele-converter (model VCZ-50). This converts, say, a 40 mm lens to a 200 mm, which is equivalent to about an 800 mm lens on a 35 mm camera! When shooting at these extremes, it's advisable to use a tripod; otherwise, your image will suffer from the shakes. For this reason, the To-

kina extender has a steadying brace built in. These high-power devices are bulkier and more expensive than extenders, but these are the trade-offs for that kind of zoom power.

Some conversion lenses show a more radical view of the world. The Coast VF 3 Deluxe Fisheye lens comes in models that fit 49, 52, 55 and 58 mm thread diameters and has a flat front surface so you can mount other filters in front of it. Most fisheye lenses "vignette" (cut off the corners of the frame) but looking through one is like holding a convex mirror up to the world. Although you shouldn't make a habit of shooting with a fisheye, it can add startling visual interest to a tape.

Finally, how would you like to mount almost any lens—such as that from your 35 mm SLR camera or from that old interchangeable lens movie camera in the attic—onto your camcorder? New camcorders—the Handycam 2006i from Sony and the BV8 from Beaulieu—allow you to do just that. All you need is an adapter. When using such lenses, however, you must focus and set the exposure yourself.

#### **AUDIO OPTIONS**

Sound quality can make or break your tapes, and different shooting circumstances require different aids. For example, a wind baffle is essential for outdoor shooting. These come with most camcorders or can be easily fashioned out of foam rubber or cloth with an elastic keeper around it.

You have several options for recording sound from distant subjects. One is a wired microphone that runs from the sound source to the microphone input plug on the camcorder. These microphones can be set near subjects (with the wires snaked under rugs, behind lamps, etc.) or hand-held by subjects if you're doing a straight interview-type shoot. Hand-held mics are available in a wide price range at any audio or music store. Just be sure the input jack matches your camcorder.

Another option is a wireless remote microphone. The microphone is attached to a miniature transmitter that signals an antenna on the camcorder, that in turn is attached to the microphone input on the body. The Sima SoundCatcher is one such system. Although any microphone can be used with the SoundCatcher, the most common setup involves a lapel microphone clipped to a speaker's clothes. When using this setup, check the sound quality before you shoot, as a microphone attached to clothing may yield a scratchy sound when the subject breathes.

continued on page 106



BY JAMES R. CARUSO AND MAVIS E. ARTHUR

Remarkable new post-production aids promise to turn dens into mini-studios.

Most videophiles realize that people are unwilling to sit for long in front of a TV to see home videos of an entire vacation or the baby growing up in real time. We're used to seeing whole lifetimes speed past in 22 minutes and 38 seconds (the actual program time in a half-hour TV slot). We know from our own viewing experience that we must edit our hours of home recordings down to lengths others will look forward to seeing.

Fortunately, there has been a quiet revolution going on in home video. Thanks largely to digital processing and new computer products, some of the editing, audio and special effects that were difficult and expensive to do at a broadcast level just a few years ago are now available to home videographers at reasonable prices. We think some of these post-production accessories - including editing controllers, computer aids, SEGs and character generators - will startle you with their range and capabilities.

#### **EDIT CONTROLLERS**

All editing controllers must be compatible with the VCRs or camcorders to which they're linked. In addition, their ability to control the accuracy of edits depends on the degree to which attached VCRs can control tape slippage. Before you buy a controller, talk to your video dealer about its compatibility or check the manufacturers' literature (for the controller and the VCRs). In either case, make sure the controller you want will work properly with any equipment you have or plan to pur-

One of the more inexpensive editing controllers is DirectED by Videonics (see "Videotests," Feb. '88). Besides editing footage, it allows you to add words and graphics by remote control. All you need is a camcorder for playback and a VCR with a wireless remote control. You place the DirectED's tiny wand in front of the remote sensor on the VCR. Then you insert a special DirectED videotape into the VCR and your VCR's commands are learned by the system. Next, insert a blank tape in the VCR and the recorded tape in your camcorder and make a dub. The DirectED will record a time sequence it can understand on the dub.

Play the dub back and make edit decisions by pressing a button on the remote, once for where the shot is to start and again for where you want it to end. The sys-

James R. Caruso and Mavis E. Arthur have produced more than 600 TV shows and com-James R. Caruso and Mavis E. Arthur have produced more than 600 TV shows and commercials. Their latest book, Easy TV Editing and Post Production (Prentice-Hall), will be published later this year.

tem will store the shot in its memory. You can then review the show before actually recording it onto your edit master. Any changes you make will be updated in the memory. You can add graphic titles or credits in 64 colors and backgrounds and in three type styles. The final step is to put the original videotape into your playback machine and a blank tape in the recording machine and follow the menu instructions. DirectED does the rest.

DirectED can also maintain a library file of your shows, perform wipes and fades and store all your edit decisions on a master tape so you can go back and re-

cut a show.

But DirectED has two drawbacks. It is slow and time consuming, and the frame accuracy of the edits is not precise. We found them to be plus or minus about 12 to 15 frames depending on the recording VCR. If your patience and tolerance fall into these parameters it is a good buy at its suggested price of \$499.95.

If you have less tolerance and time, consider an elegant unit named the EC 1000U Editing Controller by Future Video Products in Laguna Niguel, California. The EC 1000U can control assemble, insert and manual edits on all videotape formats. In assemble edit mode, you can select and make up to nine edits, preview your decisions and change the in or out points of any of them

When you are happy with your first nine edits, just press the dub key and the EC 1000U cues the play and record machines to record your edited master. Then move to the next part of your

Back to the Future: Future Video's EC 1000U can control assemble, insert and manual edits in all tape formats.

have the whole show "in the can." If you decide to change a shot, the EC 1000U is also capable of doing an insert edit; that is, recording over a previously recorded shot.

The EC 1000U is capable of precise frame accuracy, but only if you have VCRs that can cue to an exact mark on the videotape. The unit requires machines with Sony L or S connectors or a five-pin Matsushita connector (found on some but not all major manufacturer VCRs) to take full advantage of its features

Future Video Products also has an SEG for \$495 that can be triggered from the EC 1000U so that you can preset wipes or fades and let the unit do the rest. The EC 1000U's suggested price is \$495.

If you want to step up to computer editing - and have an IBM-compatible or an Amiga - Future Video's EC 1000 PRO Editing Controller, for \$595, may be the answer. You will also need the RS 232 PC-Video Interface Port for \$100 and the EDL-1000 Edit List Management Software for \$295 (or you can write your own software). This setup lets you make up to 999 edit decisions and store them in the computer. You

can preview the whole show before you record it or change the edits as easily as you change paragraphs in a computer word-processing setup. Another device, the VideoCut 10, made by Hama in West Germany, is for 8mm fans. This unit uses an 8mm camcor-

der as the playback machine

(the camcorder must have an L type connector) and an 8mm, VHS or Beta VCR as the record machine. It has a high-tech design with a hinged LED display. Each button on the keyboard is dedicated to only one function such as edit in, edit out, search, enter, perform, etc. This type of control, coupled with clear and concise prompts on the LED screen, make this unit very easy to operate. The VideoCut 10 is loaded with usable features and bears a suggested price of \$1249.50.

The VideoCut 20 has the same features as the VideoCut 10 but is designed to edit Beta or VHS formats in addition to 8mm. It also has Vertical Interval Sync (VIS) - the black line you see at the bottom of a TV screen when the vertical hold is not working properly to enhance frame accuracy.

When a tape is played back through the VideoCut 20, the controller can read the VIS code and the exact frames at which you want to start and stop an edit. Since the VideoCut 20 does not use an audio track for the time code information, you can still use both audio tracks for stereo sound if your VCR is hi-fi. The VideoCut 20 is for serious videophiles and carries a suitably serious price of \$2,495.

Panasonic makes a complete editing system that requires two VCRs and an edit controller called the AG-A95, for \$400. The VCR selection depends on your format. If you choose VHS, you will need two Panasonic AG-1950 VCRs at a suggested price of \$1,650 each and one AG-A95. You can reduce the cost slightly by using one portable Panasonic slightly by using one portable Panasonic AG-2400 VCR, for \$1,250, as the player. The Super VHS VCR, the AG-1830,

show and repeat the procedure until you Where's Charley?: Progressive Image

Technology's Video

Charley is a Gen-lock

device for the IBM PC



Cutter's Way: Hama's VideoScript 50 titler (left) and VideoCut 10 editing controller (below).

lists for \$1,800 and is compatible with the AG-A95.

This editing setup lets you insert, assemble and audio dub from the edit controller as well as jog and shuttle the play or record videotape in either direction with a knob on the edit controller. You can select eight edits and display them on the AG-A95. Once you've made a selection, just press a button and let the machines perform the edits.

#### SPECIAL EFFECTS

SEG (special effects generator) is a broad term that means different things to different people. In this article, we define it as any device with which you can change, alter or perform a transition of the video/audio signal in editing. SEGs are chiefly used to add a fade, wipe or other effect you cannot create or effectively insert with a camcorder or VCR. SEGs also help to maintain the clarity of a recorded picture through editing generations and correct some color balance mistakes you might have made while recording, like going from natural to artificial light without changing the white balance on the camera.

One of the finest units in the home video market is the VidiMate VDM-200 from Vidicraft. At a suggested price of \$349.95, the VidiMate lets you color correct, enhance a video image, split the screen on your monitor to compare the original with the corrected image and automatically fade from or to black.

The VidiMate also lets you mix original audio with narration from a microphone during the edit, add background music or record a new audio track for

your own music video. The presence of two video inputs lets you fade to black from one source and from black to the other by simply pressing a switch. You can also easily make multiple dubs because the VDM-200 comes with four video/audio outputs.

The Ambico V-0300 SEG, for \$425, allows you to wipe from one video source to another in seven colors. You can also choose one of 15 different wipe patterns, then change the shape or invert the wipe in an infinite number of ways. The wipe pattern can be preset and you can place it manually or activate an automatic variable-speed wipe control. You can control the pause function of both your record and playback VCRs from the control panel, so you can cut from one video source to the other. The unit also has stereo capability.

The unique but hard-to-find Sansui VX-99, for \$600, has the usual wipes,



Mixmaster: Numark's VAM-2000 mixes signals from up to three video and four audio sources.

colors and fades for both audio and video that are found on other SEGs. But four features make the VX-99 unique: a switch to

found on other SEGs. But four features make the VX-99 unique: a switch to turn your video into a negative image, a switch that creates the look of an oil painting, a Gen-lock function so you can switch a camera with Gen-lock to another camera without Gen-lock, and external processor terminals to connect a character generator or a computer to add graphics or titles.

If you are serious about special effects and have \$3,000 to spend, the Panasonic WJ-MX 10 is for you. This unit has a digital frame synchronizer, which means you can mix two non-synchronized video signals without either glitches or time base correctors (TBCs).

When a videotape is recorded on a VCR or a camcorder, part of the video signal is unstable. When you try to mix (fade, wipe, dissolve) two video sources, the picture jitters and the color becomes unstable. A TBC replaces the unstable code on the tape with a stable code. If you have two playback VCRs, you need a TBC for each. But the digital circuits in some SEGs, like the WJ-MX 10, take care of this problem and synchronize the two video signals for glitch-free transitions.

While in the digital mode, the WJ-MX lets you do a stable freeze frame, a stroboscope with an adjustable interval up to two seconds and adjustable mosaic and painting effects. You can perform wipe-mixes by placing one picture inside another, and superimpose over any of three video inputs and eight color back-

The Numark VAM-2000, for \$4,990, is even more sophisticated. It has all of the features of the Panasonic mixer plus a few extras that are really interesting. A strobe effect follows the beat from an audio input. Three video inputs can be mixed without time base correction, and you can mix an audio track from up to four different sources after you have edited the video. The VAM-2000 also boosts the video's horizontal resolution to 400 lines.

The element most often left to chance in home video production is audio. Most people simply concentrate on the picture. Luckily, some companies have solutions to this problem. Sima's SoundMixer, for example, is simple to use and lets you add background music and voice-over narration or raise and lower the audio from the original videotape while you dub or edit.

Many of the graphics, titles and credits that add the professional look to

home videos can be done by aiming your camera at an art card and using camera moves like push, pull, pan, tilt and rack focus. You can process the signal through some SEGs for added effects. But you can also get into electronic graphics at affordable prices. The Super Micro Script by Scriptovision in Canada is one of the most affordable routes. For \$295, it creates letters, numbers and simple graphics in eight colors over an internally generated background, during taping or over recorded video during an edit. It stores up to seven pages of type or graphics and scrolls them right to left or bottom to top at variable speeds.

The smaller of its two type sizes allows 32 characters per line and 16 lines per page. The large letters yield four lines of ten characters. The unit can Gen-lock to an external video signal and also has color bars, which are useful for setting up a monitor. It is easy to use and a versatile character generator.

Another interesting product from Hama is the VideoScript 51 title/character generator for \$1,049. It has two styles of type, four sizes and seven colors. It can store five pages of eight lines each and crawl them in any sequence from right to left or bottom to top of a screen

at various speeds. Your graphics can also fade up or out over a color background or the video pictures.

Ambico's V-0303 Titling Effects Generator, for \$1,295, includes a title camera and a copy stand in addition to the effects unit. Black & white graphics are placed under the camera and processed through the effects generator, where you can turn them into almost any color over your own video or a color background. The unit also fades or cuts graphics in or out with audio and lets you change your video color.

#### COMPUTERS

Those with computers have a new world to discover in video graphics. Companies are making software, hardware or a combination of both for Amigas, Commodores, Apple IIs, Macintoshes and IBMs that will vastly expand your graphics capability. Even the most expensive are a fraction of the cost of broadcast equipment. They are all a real buy considering their sophistication, and some even meet broadcast standards for recording.

At the low end, the Home Video Producer, for \$49.95 from Epyx, gives continued on page 108

Attention Users!



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From night shooting to still printing, 11 offbeat video ideas.

Isn't it annoying not to be able to shoot in the dark? Or underwater, or smoothly out a car window? Have your audiences sighed in disappointment because you couldn't find just the right sound effect, or murmured disapproval because your monitor was out of whack? Lest your soul shrivel in despair, we've assembled a gaggle of offbeat goods (photographed at right) that should fill the gaps in anyone's video way of life.

Dark Invader. This night-vision scope by B.E. Meyers & Company can pick out images well below the low-light level of a conventional camcorder. It promises to intensify ambient light up to 75,000 times before displaying phosphor-green images on its 25 mm screen. An f/2.8 135mm lens is built in and several accessories, such as an infrared illuminator, are available. It fastens easily onto a camcorder. You can buy a special Kodak 8mm camcorder, for \$2,250, to go with it or have Meyers configure special adapters for other camcorder brands (Panasonic, JVC, etc.). Price: \$4,090, with discounts for law enforcers. The Dark Invader is available through video, gun and surveillance dealers or directly from Meyers (206-881-6648).

Universal Car Camera Support. Drive while you shoot - pictures, that is - with this German-made camcorder brace by Hama. A large suction cup attaches to the car body or a window, while a safety cord prevents expensive mishaps. Model 4040 accommodates all camcorder and camera models. Price: \$99.95. It's available through photo dealers.

Sound Effects Library. Every-

one from Walt Disney Productions to Stevie Wonder has employed sound effects and musical fragments from Sound Ideas' two collections of discs: Series 1000, which has 3,000 stereo effects on 28 CDs, and Series 2000, which has 2,000 new digitally recorded effects on 22 CDs. The sounds range from musical to biological, as in the section detailing the myriad croaking patterns of frogs. *Prices*: \$1,250 and \$975, respectively; \$1,850 for both. Available by calling 800-387-3030.

Marine Packs. Since time immemorial, weekend videomakers have yearned in vain to play Jacques Cousteau. Now Sony has freed consum-



Wet Suit: Sony's MPK-40 camcorder housing.

erkind from this ancient disability with two underwater housings, the MPK-F40 - for camcorder models CCD-V9, CCD-F40 and CCD-SP7 – and the MPK-VII for the CCD-VII. Prices: \$1,200 and \$1,600, respectively.

Scene Slate. Lights, camera where's the clapper? Alan Gordon Enterprises has a great one, the VO400 Large Velcro Slate. The Velcro secures the numerals on this 12- by 11-inch pine object. Lesser versions - like the LiteWate Slate (photographed), which requires a dry marker - are also available. Prices: \$90 and \$35, respectively, plus \$3 for shipping. Available from Alan Gordon Enterprises, Box 315, Hollywood, CA 90078.

Video Printer. Super VHS and RGB inputs are the new wrinkles on Hitachi's latest video printer, model VY-55A, which prints 3.9- by 5-inch copies (we used to call them snapshots) from video sources in about 90 seconds. If, however, your desire is a full-dress still picture, Hitachi's VX-100A floppy video system stores up to 50 stills on a two-inch disk. Prices: \$2,695 each.

Imager and TeleCine Adapter. Transfer photos to videotape with the Ambico V-0617 Imager. The slide-in photo holder accommodates prints up to 4 by 6 inches and a macro lens adapter allows easy camcorder setup. To handle old home-movie films and slides as well, add the V-0622 TeleCine Adapter. Models V-0617 and V-0622 are packaged together as model V-0655. Price: \$129.95.

Videotape Cleaning System. Lady Macbeth would have appreciated this wet-system videotape cleaner from Hahnel, which dispels electrostatic charges and brushes fingerprints, smoke particles and other foreign substances off soiled tapes. The consumer model is VTR-101. Price: \$79.95. Order by calling 800-387-0620.

Tune-Up Tape. Feed your VCR this 20-minute TV Tune-up adjustment program. It will help you twiddle monitor knobs like a real pro. VidStrip's color bars and gray scale - designed for

continued on page 108





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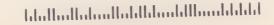
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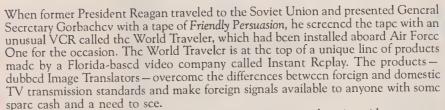
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Unusual VCRs break down the barriers between the world's video standards.



As those with friends or family overscas can attest, exchanging videotapes can be a trial of errors. Tapes made in foreign broadcast standards, such as PAL or SECAM, simply won't work on conventional NTSC VCRs and TVs. Nor will NTSC tapes work on foreign decks. Viewers' usual options have been to have such tapes professionally transferred to or from the NTSC standard, or to acquire special VCRs for playback on special TVs that accommodate several standards.

Instant Replay's gear offers other, in some cases less costly, alternatives. The Image Translator line consists of five VCRs, one videocassette player and one camcorder that play tapes in foreign standards as well as NTSC. Two models also record in foreign standards. All the models play PAL and SECAM tapes at both SP and EP.

Their prices range from \$695 to \$1,995, and if the high end seems higher than most VCRs these days, consider that the Image Translators have one feature possessed by no other VCR: They can play back foreign-standard tapes on ordinary NTSC TVs, although SECAM tapes will play back on standard sets only in black & white. Most Japanese and some European VCR makers offer multi-standard VCRs, but all must be used with multi-standard TVs or monitors (see sidebar).







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### CODEBUSTERS

### Multi-Standard VCRs and TVs



Despite proclamations about the world getting smaller every day, videophiles with ties in other countries are hard pressed to find VCRs and TVs that will play videotapes from more than one of the three major standards—our own NTSC, PAL (which predominates in Western Europe and South America) and SECAM (France and Eastern Europe). What options are there other than obtaining one of Instant Replay's image-translating VCRs?

Welcome to the multi-standard VCRs and TVs of the gray market—products not authorized by manufacturers for sale to consumers in the U.S. but available anyway. In fact, if you call U.S. product representatives of video manufacturers (Hitachi, Sony and Panasonic, among others), you'll be told that the companies don't sell multi-standard gear to American consumers.

You'll have better luck if you try the companies' industrial divisions. Their dealer networks are authorized to sell multi-standard gear. But even though multi-standard VCRs and TVs can be hard to find, they are available, for sale or rental, from specialty stores in major metropolitan areas. Indeed, they are often carried by reputable consumer dealers whose clients include universities, foreign representatives and U.S. legislators.

There is a trade-off, however. Gray market goods are not covered by manufacturers' warranties or serviced by manufacturers' local repair stores or factories. But several New York multi-standard machine dealers we interviewed offer their own warranties and claim to be properly equipped for repair work.

"Readers accused me of false advertising when I advertised my multi-standard machines in *The New York Times*," says Paul Singh, owner of Video Overseas in New York City. "People even called the manufacturers to check my claims and were told the goods didn't exist. I had to have a guy from the *Times* come in here and check the stuff for himself to prove it does exist."

Indeed, Video Overseas' menu of multi-standard (NTSC, PAL, SECAM) mono VCRs includes a Sharp VC799, a Hitachi VT498EM, a Toshiba V87MS and a Panasonic NVG50, according to Singh. The gear comes with a 30-day store warranty, and a repairman is on hand. You can bring one of these VCRs home, along with a multi-standard TV, for around \$1,000, Singh says. Multi-standard gear is also available from National, JVC, Grundig, Philips, Sony, NEC and others—but not through the manufacturers.

Other outlets, like Manhattan's Columbus TV & Video Center and Video Central, Inc., rent multi-standard gear—at prices ranging from \$45 per day for a VHS deck to \$75 per day for a 19-inch PAL-compatible TV. Columbus quoted a price of \$210 a week for a TV/VCR combination compatible with the U.S. 110-volt system.

Camcorder aficionados can also take heart. Álthough we were unable to find any multi-standard video shooters, several importers offer standard-dedicated PAL and SECAM camcorders.

—J.T.Way

The difference between Image Translators and other multi-standard VCRs is that multi-standard decks play tapes in the format in which they were recorded, thus requiring a compatible TV. Image Translators convert foreign signals into quasi-NTSC, retaining the original line and field frequencies, and enabling them to run on *most* standard NTSC TVs.

They will not work, however, with any TV that uses countdown vertical circuitry. For example, Image Translators will not work with any RCA monitor made within the last three years, some Mitsubishi projection TVs, some inexpensive 13-inch sets, some Sony digital TVs and other digital models. (If you don't know whether the circuitry in your set is compatible with the Image Translator, call Instant Replay at 305-448-7088 and they'll tell you.)

Charles Azar founded Instant Replay in 1977 to produce a magazine on videocassette. The company evolved into a video production house, selling alignment tapes and special interest videos for a number of broadcast organizations. In 1979, with the help of engineer Manuel Mejlocowitz, Azar came up with the idea for a deck that could play any tape. Mejlocowitz modified a 1980 Matsushita VCR to play PAL as well as NTSC tapes, at first for internal use. Word of the unusual machine soon spread. "I charged \$350 to \$500 to modify a VCR and we got such a large response that I started thinking about a full-scale business," recalls Azar.

But there was a thorny non-technical hurdle to overcome. "Modifying the decks voided the manufacturers' warranties, so we had to come up with our own," continues Azar. Instant Replay offered a one-year warranty on parts for the VCR and two years on parts and labor for the Image Translator circuitry. Azar sold 50 Image Translators in the first year.

Today, Matsushita video products comprise 80 percent of the base of Instant Replay's line. VCRs from Hitachi and Funai make up the rest. "We use Matsushita decks because they are easy to service and, therefore, modify," says Azar. "We've also found them stable and maintenance-free."

NTSC, SECAM and PAL are the

#### Multi-standard TVs and VCRs are hard to find, but are available.

three basic TV systems used in the world today. NTSC is broadcast in North and Central America and Japan. Russia, France and Eastern Europe transmit in SECAM. Western Europe, India, Australia, Great Britain, Africa, China and a few other countries use PAL. There are also several sub-systems for each standard (such as PAL B, PAL

G, PAL M and PAL N).

PAL itself stands for phase alternate line. This means the phase of the chroma signal changes every scanning line by 180 degrees, unlike NTSC in which the phase stays constant for one field, then steps forward 90 degrees. SECAM is a French acronym for a phrase that means sequential memory. Each of its scanning lines contains only one color. The lines are stored by the system, which reconstructs the color afterward. Both PAL and SECAM are generally rated at 625 lines at 60 fields per second. NTSC is rated at 525 lines and 50 fields per second.

#### **IMAGE TRANSLATION**

Translating a PAL or SECAM signal into one capable of playing on an NTSC TV requires a number of modifications. First, the VCR's tape speed must be changed. VHS PAL and SECAM tapes travel 23.39 millimeters per second at SP and 11.70 mm/s at LP. NTSC tape runs at the faster pace of 33.33 mm/s at SP and the slower pace of 11.11 mm/s at SLP.

The FM carrier frequency signal is also different. The NTSC range is 3.4 to 4.4 megahertz. But PAL and SECAM work at a range between 3.8 and 4.8 mHz. Proprietary circuitry makes the conversion. A further modification deals with the chroma or color signal. The NTSC chroma subcarrier is at 3.58 mHz, while PAL's color subcarrier is at 4.43 mHz. Again, a proprietary Instant Replay circuit does the job.

The SECAM color system is trickier to convert. As a result, all but one Image Translator play SECAM tapes only in black & white. Since both PAL and NTSC chroma systems use AM signals modulated at right angles to each other (which is known as quadrature modulation), they share some characteristics when it comes to color. However, SECAM signals use an FM chroma sigTape



If an investment in multi-standard gear seems too big a price to pay for dabbling in foreign relations, consider having your PAL or SECAM tapes transferred to NTSC (or vice versa) by one of the many video services listed in local Yellow Pages.

"To a certain extent, standard transfers are still an esoteric corner of the market, but, with the increasing VCR penetration overseas, we're seeing the market grow," says Nick Day, general manager of the New York outlet of London-based Globe Video Services. "Our customers are mostly people who have family in Europe and want to send tapes of weddings or other big events. A lot of our customers come from New York, but many come from around the country as well."

Standard-to-standard transfers are not all priced equally, however, and comparison shopping is a must. A recent survey found prices ranging from \$70 per hour to \$35 for ten minutes to a flat rate of \$75 per job. Some conversions, especially by companies geared to the corporate/industrial marketplace, can cost more than \$200

for a two-hour tape.

Most standard converting services also convert from format to format—from 8mm to Super VHS, for example. An 8mm NTSC tape could be turned into PAL

VHS, or vice versa.

When choosing a transfer facility, check the kind of system converter it uses. Essentially, there are three levels of quality. Broadcast (professional) standard converters cost \$150,000 and up and are generally used for one-inch magnetic tape. Industrial standard converters cost around \$50,000, allowing the facility to charge consumers competitive rates. Like their more advanced broadcast counterparts, these devices convert video signals to digital code, interpolate and process the information into the new standard and lay it down in analog form on fresh half-inch tape (generally included in the price, but make sure).

Standard converters also have a low end, often found in unlikely locations like the back of Indian grocery stores in large cities. (India is a major motion picture producer.) These convertors cost in the range of \$10,000 used and work entirely with analog signal information. Unfortunately, the consumer pays a high price in

color quality—so beware of so-called bargains.

Some conversion facilities also offer editing suites where you can trim down your videos or even add second-language subtitles. "We encourage self service," says Alex Shagholi, owner of New York's International Video Services. "We'll teach you how to edit in one hour. You can perfect your tape before you change format and send it overseas." An International Video Services suite costs \$15 per hour for VHS and \$20 for S-VHS.

Multi-standard facilities see an interesting range of customers. Video Overseas' Singh reports that an increasing proportion of his business comes from Russians, since the recent arrival of glasnost has finally made international tape trading possible. -J.T. Wav nal and is not quadrature modulated. It requires different circuitry for color recovery.

They will also record or dub from PAL or SECAM sources but with less acceptable results. Image Translators are designed as playback devices only, and used that way the image quality they deliver is quite good (see "Videotests," Dec. '88). Azar himself warns that recording on Image Translators will yield a "viewable color picture, but one that is not entertainment quality. While discernible, the picture will shimmer. If you try to record an NTSC movie or TV show, the recording will be slightly jittery and black & white. This is because of the difference in scanning lines and fields-per-second between the various standards. The electronic circuitry in the Image Translators have no problem with this, but mechanical parts such as the tape transport and head drum cannot cope with such huge differences when recording.

The Instant Replay lineup starts with the 620 IT3 VCP, for \$659. This eight-pound, VHS player features repeat play, auto play, auto rewind, a wireless remote control and optional 12-volt operation for use on cars, boats and mobile

TRANSFER-IT
Videotape your home movies and sines.

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No longer is it necessary to drag out your old projector and screen to enjoy those memories stored on 8mm film or 35mm slides. The Azden "Transfer-It" is the easy and inexpensive way to transfer to today's format—videotape.

AZDEN 147 New Hyde Park Road, Franklin Square, NY 11010 (516) 328-7500 homes. Next comes the 610 IT3, for \$759—a basic VCR featuring a cable-ready tuner, 4-event/14-day programming, an electronic tape counter, full special effects with four video heads, HQ circuitry and a wireless remote. The 611 IT3 adds noise-free special effects, thanks to four video heads, and costs \$895

The 618 IT3 VCR, for \$1,495, includes hi-fi sound, two audio outputs, variable speed slow motion, an automatic program finder, an MTS decoder, simulcast capability and 8-event/30 day

#### Multi-standard sources

The following companies either sell or rent multi-standard VCRs and TVs or offer standard-conversion services for videotapes.

Columbus TV & Video Center, 529 Columbus Ave., New York, NY 10024; 212-496-2626. Rentals.

Global Video Communications Corp., 3255 Cahuenga Blvd. West, Los Angeles, CA 90068; 213-851-1190. Conversions.

Globe Video Services, 286 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10001; 212-695-6868. Conversions.

Instant Replay, 2951 S. Bayshore Dr., Miami, FL 33133; 305-448-7088. Sales and conversions.

International Video Services, 1501 Broadway, New York, NY 10036; 212-730-1411. Conversions. Polycom, 142 East Ontario, Chicago, IL 60611; 312-337-6000. Conversions.

Video Central, Inc., 225 West 36 St., New York, NY 10018; 212-947-6960. Sales, rentals and conversions.

Video Clinic, Inc., 7726 Forest Lane, Dallas, TX 7523C; 214-987-0987. Sales, rentals and conversions.

Video Conversion International, 168 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60601; 312-726-6556. Conversions.

Video Overseas, Inc., 249 West 23 St., New York, NY 10011; 212-645-0797. Sales and conversions.

Video Scan Systems, Inc., 12260 SW 8 St., Stc. 114, Miami, FL 33184; 305-223-6581. Conversions. Video TV Care, 5441 Alpha Rd., Dallas, TX 75240; 214-788-0051. Sales and conversions.

Wilder Bros. Video, 10327 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90025; 213-557-3500. Conversions. —J.T. Way clude multiple tuners and modulators, four heads, wireless remote control, 4-event/14-day programming, HQ circuitry and multi-voltage capability. The VCR is the only one of its kind that includes an RGB output for use with suitably equipped TVs or monitors. It

programming. An optional surround

sound decoder and RGB output are

wish to tape foreign programming, the

World Traveler, for \$1,995, might be the

answer. This unit will play back and re-

cord PAL, SECAM and NTSC in color

in any country in the world. Features in-

If you frequently travel abroad and

weighs about 16 pounds.

available.

The 77IT5S, for \$1,995, is Instant Replay's first Super VHS Image Translator. It even has a tape economy switch that lets you use VHS tape in the S-VHS recording mode with only a slight increase in the video signal-tonoise ratio. Other features include hi-fi sound, an MTS decoder, digital index and address search systems, 183-channel tuner, 8-event/30-day onscreen programming, remote control and bar code programming. The Model 77 also incorporates new Supercolor circuits to improve color fidelity during PAL tape playback. Through the use of delay lines and comb filters, this system doubles the lines of color information. Supercolor is also available as an option on all other Image Translators for an extra \$250 to \$300. An optional RGB output is also available.

Although it will not record PAL or SECAM from its camera section, the Movie Maker, for \$1,695, is a solidly equipped full-size VHS camcorder that can play standard PAL and SECAM tapes on any ordinary NTSC view-screen.

At a professional level, Instant Replay also makes the Standards Converter, an optical unit that translates NTSC, PAL and SECAM tapes to any format. The system consists of an Image Translator VCR and a high-quality, 13-inch RGB monitor. You supply a camcorder in NTSC, PAL or SECAM (all three are available from Instant Replay) and shoot the images off the screen. The converter eliminates the flicker normally associated with optical conversion. At \$3,995 the Standards Converter isn't cheap, but it is the lowest priced converter on the market and a helpful tool with which to start a tape conversion business. In fact, Instant Replay also operates a standards conversion business. So if you don't own an Image Translator, you can call on the company to transfer your foreign or domestic tapes, which may be the simplest translation solution of all.

For additional Informatian, circle No. 18 on Reader Service Caro

## PROGRAMMING

## Theatrical Releases

#### Die Hard

1988. Bruce Willis, Alan Rickman, Bonnie Bedelia, Alexander Godunov; dir. John McTiernan. 132m. (R) Hi St cc \$89.98. LV also. CBS/Fox. V image: fair.

Like the cool gang leader in *Die Hard*, I enjoyed making models when I was a kid. But the fun part always came when I would pick up a hammer and smash the model into a million pieces. *Die Hard* is made by—and meant for—overgrown boys who never got over that

destructive urge. Take a modern 40-story-office building, show off its high-tech features, play with it awhile, then blow it to smithereens. That's entertainment!

The building (the real star of this movie) is the L.A. headquarters of a Japanese megacorporation, and the agents of its destruction are a multinational group of robbers/terrorists armed with machine guns, rocket launchers and plastic explosives. They take control of the building during the company's Christmas party with the intention of

stealing \$640 million in bearer bonds. New York City cop John McClane (Willis), there to visit his estranged wife, escapes from the party, however, and attempts to thwart their plans.

Willis was paid \$5 million to be in *Die Hard*, but the best that can be said about his performance is that his glib, sneering manner isn't nearly as grating as it has been on *Moonlighting* and in his other films. He's completely outclassed by Alan Rickman, who is marvelous as the assault team's leader, Hans Gruber. Rickman is glib and sneering, too, but he imbues the villain with perverse charm and dry, urbane wit.

Director McTiernan (Predator) keeps the thrills coming fast and furiously, glossing over the glaring holes in the plot and the implausibility of many of Willis' hairbreadth escapes. (You try grabbing onto the rim of an elevator door as you're falling down the shaft.) The quieter moments are hopelessly corny — the subplot between McClane and his career-oriented wife plays like an outdated Movie of the Week.

Still, a film like this is really a show-case for special effects, and the explosions and shootouts are spectacular. Unfortunately, Die Hard loses a lot in the translation to video—it begs to be seen on a huge movie screen with booming Dolby stereo. Some truly awful panning and scanning, along with the loss of depth incurred in transferring film to tape, diminishes the impact of some heart-stopping moments. Nonetheless, Die Hard is a guaranteed good time.

-Lou Kesten



Atlas Mugged: Bruce Willis and Bonnie Bedelia suffer unexpected terrors in Die Hard.

#### Bull Durham

1988. Kevin Costner, Susan Sarandon, Tim Robbins, Trey Wilson; wr./dir. Ron Shelton. 108m. (R) Hi St cc \$89.98. Orion. V image: excel.

For a baseball movie, Bull Durham isn't all that concerned with America's favorite pastime. Its best coaching advice is on how to score in the sack, not

## Theatrical Releases



Salty Minor: Kevin Costner plays Crash Davis, a sagacious veteran catcher, in Bull Durham.

on the field. In a humorous game of bats and garter belts, *Bull Durham* both worships baseball and transcends it, becoming a terrific satire on relationships by the bottom of the ninth.

The natural link between carnality and the game is embodied by Annie Savoy (Sarandon), a flower child of the "Church of Baseball" who never lacks a witty saying. ("Making love is like hitting a baseball. You've just got to relax and concentrate.") Every year she inducts a promising member of the minor league Durham Bulls to her training regimen of Walt Whitman, bondage and hitting practice. Two players that catch her lascivious attention are "Nuke LaLoosh (Robbins), a young pitcher whose towering naivete matches the power of his fastballs, and catcher "Crash" Davis (Costner), a burned-out veteran who's been brought in to season Nuke for better things than the Carolina League.

Though it's puppy dog Nuke who gets into Annie's program, Crash gets satisfaction by confounding Nuke with his own peculiar baseball zen. Bombarded with abstract philosophies for throwing the perfect spitball, Nuke's pitching improves while his psyche degenerates. By midseason, he's wearing a garter belt on the mound, breathing through his eyelids and using his libido to mount a winning streak instead of Annie.

For all of its hilarious diamond and boudoir antics, *Bull Durham's* true joy lies in its marvelously witty script and direction. Ron Shelton's humor is

earthy, wise and daring. Far from the usual dumb jocks (except for Nuke), his wryly acted characters are in harmony with the divine baseball spirit. Sex to them is a logical extension of baseball, and their fetishes provide some of the most tantalizing screen eroticism seen in years. Bull Durham signals a new era for sports films, satisfying fans with clinch games as it reaches outside the stadium for greater truths.

-Daniel Schweiger

#### Married to the Mob

1988. Michelle Pfeiffer, Matthew Modine, Dean Stockwell, Mercedes Ruehl; dir. Jonathan Demme. 104m. (R) Hi St cc \$89.98. Orion. V image: good.

The end-credit sequence of Married to the Mob is almost as interesting as the movie itself. The bed of outtakes seems to indicate that Demme started out to make a movie that was stronger on character but had trouble shaping the material in the editing room.

The film's opening sequences wickedly lampoon gangsters seeking white-bread respectability in the suburbs, a point driven home when Frank "Cucumber" DeMarco (Baldwin) ices a rival on a crowded commuter train. Meanwhile, his wife Angela (Pfeiffer) has tired of sitting on stolen furniture, having to take part in the mob's office politics and watching Frank Jr. trying to emulate Dad. She wants out.

Although Frank won't give her a divorce, a small personal misunderstanding prompts his boss, Tony "The Tiger" Russo (Stockwell), to solve that problem with an automatic. Tony then tries

to put the make on Angela, and she heads for a fresh start on Manhattan's Lower East Side. Fat chance: Tony won't quit, his violently jealous wife (Ruehl) thinks the attraction is mutual and the FBI stakes her out, hoping she's the key to bringing down Tony.

As Demme shifts between gangster parody and Angela's new life in a lively, multi-racial neighborhood, the style and tone keep clashing. The picture also suffers from the central miscasting of Modine, who's too lightweight as the G-man who falls for Angela. It's Pfeiffer who holds the movie together, with a spunky and winning performance in which her physical beauty takes second place to her acting. Stockwell's full-of-himself capo and Ruehl's fire-breathing tigress provide most of the actual laughs.

The movie looks and sounds just fine, with a soundtrack ranging from Rosemary Clooney to reggae, the aural equivalent of the wildly colorful surroundings. Married to the Mob isn't quite the joyride it means to be, but it's not hard to forgive the bumps in the road.

-Sol Louis Siegel

#### Punchline

1988. Sally Field, Tom Hanks, John Goodman, Mark Rydell; wr./dir. David Seltzer. 123m. (R) Hi St cc \$89.95. RCA/Columbia. V image: good.

Actor Edmund Gwenn is reported to have left this life with the words "Death is easy, comedy is hard." *Punchline* is a shaky tribute to the trials and tribulations of those who dare to stand up and try to make us laugh. Hanks and Field star as two struggling comics with vastly



Market Crash:
Rival wives Mercedes
Ruehi (left) and
Michelle Pfeiffer
(second from left)
collide in Married
to the Mob.





Tanks for the Memories: Lena Olin (above) and the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia both play pivotal roles in The Unbearable Lightness of Being.



different temperaments and backgrounds who meet in a small New York comedy club and spur each other on to greater glory. Writer/director David Seltzer starts out with a firm grip on his subject, but the hard edge of determination and desperation is then softened by a soppy love story between the mis-

matched leads.

Hanks gives a solid performance as Steven Golda, a medical school dropout who happens to be a naturally gifted, frenetic comedian. Broke and alienated from his family, he clings to his craft as his only hope for success. Lilah Krytsick (Field) is a New Jersey housewife who moonlights as a comedienne. When she turns to Steven for help in honing her act, the film runs into serious trouble. Steven tells her to drop the smutty jokes she's been buying and talk about her own life. He believes she is a gifted humorist, possessing "that thing," but we don't see it. While other comics in the club have better delivery and material, even Lilah transformed is seen straining, her manner too forced.

After an impromptu night watching her perform in various clubs, Steven falls in love with Lilah, but Seltzer does not provide enough dramatic evidence to make this convincing. The detached cynicism which makes Hanks' character work becomes diffused, and unfocused sentimentality - including the denouement in which the two compete in a contest - derails the stronger, more interesting train of events.

Punchline does attempt to show the fascinating milieu of struggling comics in pursuit of the big time but cops out with a dose of old Hollywood.

-Rod Granger

#### The Unbearable Lightness of Being

1988. Daniel Day-Lewis, Juliette Binoche, Lena Olin; co-wr./dir. Philip Kaufman. 172m. (R) Hi St cc \$89.98. LV \$49.95.

Orion. V image: excel.

Milan Kundera's tragicomic love story is inseparable from the novel's observations on philosophy, history, culture and etymology. Together they form a moral portrait of life in the modern age. Tomas, the womanizing Prague neurosurgeon, falls for and marries Tereza, the small-town girl who loves books. But he can't abandon his erotic pleasures, particularly with the artist Sabina. Tereza stands for weight, responsibility, decisiveness. Sabina personifies "lightness," pure freedom, casual

If there were to be a movie version, it obviously couldn't take on all of Kundera's intellectual baggage. Instead, Kaufman and co-scenarist Jean-Claude Carriere have converted the fractured original to straight-line narrative, moving from the "Prague Spring" of 1968 to the Russian invasion to exile in Geneva and back. The movie is epic in scope and length but not in feeling; it's dreamlike and intensely erotic, drawing us into a world at once remote and achingly

Kaufman provides artistic distance through highly stylized photography by the great Sven Nykvist, perfectly chosen snippets of Leon Janacek music and his use of an international cast speaking with Czech accents. He can't portray the horror of life during the Russian occupation the way Kundera can, but he

does suggest how the resulting dependence on lies and treachery can dissolve the sense of what is and isn't real, until only the things that count - those with

'weight" - are truly visible.

Day-Lewis (Tomas) and Binoche (Tereza) are affecting. As the brazenly carnal Sabina and her Swiss lover, Olin and Derek DeLint offer the film's best performances. Amazingly, the movie is as effective on the small screen as the large - the actors fare better, in fact, against the visual pyrotechnics. The transfer is nearly miraculous, even though the three-hour movie has been squeezed onto a single cassette.

-Sol Louis Siegel

#### 2001: A Space Odyssey

1968. Keir Dullea, Gary Lockwood; pr./ dir./co-wr. Stanley Kubrick. 149m. LV Letterboxed. CX ss CAV \$124.95. Criterion. Image: excel.

#### North by Northwest

1959. Cary Grant, Eva Marie Saint; dir. Alfred Hitchcock. 136m. LV Letterboxed. CAV \$124.95. Criterion. Image: excel.

#### Singin' in the Rain

1952. Gene Kelly, Debbie Reynolds; dir. Kelly, Stanley Donen. 103m. LV CAV \$89.95. Criterion. Image: excel.

The Wizard of Oz

1939. Color/B&W. Judy Garland, Ray Bolger, Bert Lahr; dir. Victor Fleming, King Vidor. 102m. LV CAV \$99.95. Criterion.

Image: excel.
CAV-format discs provide the most exhilarating sharpness and color, but, with their half-hour-per-side limit, they also require the most patience. Two of

these four new deluxe Criterion packages are letterboxed to preserve the widescreen image. In ultra-sharp CAV, the reduction in picture height is no

problem.

The enigmatic visual language of 2001 can only benefit from letterboxing. Image is everything in this largely nonverbal work. Without the scanner's blinders on, it's easier to follow the visual storyline, as Kubrick's spacious compositions draw you into his mystic speculation on human destiny. The disc's supplementary material includes volumes of still-frame text by Kubrick's

collaborator, writer

Arthur C.

Clarke.

Alfred Hitchcock — who had the foresight to be television-conscious in 1959 — craftily composed North by Northwest to center most of the action in the wide VistaVision frame. The letterboxed version does lose a bit at the top compared to the scanned version, but that's how the director intended his most enduring comic thriller to be seen in theaters. The film has never looked more beautiful, though audio levels do fluctuate wildly on the non-digital soundtrack. The storyboards and other material in the supplement should fascinate film students.

Singin' in the Rain and The Wizard of Oz both include audio essays and liner notes by film historian Ronald Haver on the righthand analog soundtrack. Augmenting the wonderful music within Singin' are a few supplementary excerpts showing the same songs done in earlier

Brain" (first seen in *That's Dancing*) and home-movie fragments of the deleted "Jitterbug" number. This is LaserVision at its best.

—Mark Fleischmann

#### The Presidio

1988. Sean Connery, Mark Harmon, Meg Ryan; dir. Peter Hyams. 96m. (R) LV also. Paramount. V image: good.

It's a testament to Sean Connery

that he marches through *The Presidio's* inanities with dignified precision as Lt. Col. Caldwell. His underplayed suaveness is pitted against the macho gruff-



Off Base: Sean Connery is a rugged but tender career officer in The Presidio.

ness of detective Jay Austin (Harmon), who returns to San Francisco's huge military base to investigate his former military police partner's murder. Racing against an old war horse like Connery for clues, Harmon shouldn't have even bothered.

The Presidio's idea of suspense is having this mismatched duo going from one interview to the next, constantly trying to knock the enormous chips from their shoulders with jokes better reserved for TV sitcoms. Austin takes an immediate liking to Caldwell's sex kitten daughter (Ryan), who stages a car chase to his bedroom in the film's most ridiculous sequence. Determined to take this nonsense seriously, director Hyams adds long, badly written scenes of characters expressing love for one another and the army, exposition that only weighs The Presidio down further.

This dramatic and sexual posturing masks a very routine action film, replete with barroom brawls, Bullitt car chases and the inevitable shoot-out in the warehouse. Yet Connery is wonderful, even when trying to find out what bottled water has to do with the convoluted plot. Rugged and tender, Connery and Caldwell personify the film veterans whose hard-earned thunder a new breed of leading men and tough-guy pictures is trying to steal. —Daniel Schweiger



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## BLANK CHECKS

## THE VIDEO

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EO's 1987 tape tests.)

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## Kidvid

## Behind the tug of war over TV ad time

#### BY MARIANNE MEYER

The most important legislation in years towards bettering children's television, The Children's Television Act of 1988, was passed by both houses of Congress last year, only to be vetoed by President Reagan in November. But the battle's not over yet. And you can get involved.

The commercialization of children's programming has been hotly debated since 1984, when the Federal Communications Commission lifted longstanding restrictions regarding children's TV. Then-chairman Mark S. Fowler, a Reagan appointee, said the marketplace would determine what was best for children, and viewer preference would keep the reins on excessive advertising.

With no limits on the number of commercials, what happened next was not encouraging. Toy manufacturers became heavily involved in developing children's programs based on their own product lines and, in some extreme cases, broadcasters were encouraged to schedule these shows in exchange for a piece of the toy sales pie. The industry began creating programs designed to sell products rather than nurture children.

Declining ratings have led

to some shifting away from these program-length commercials, but television stations can still broadcast an unlimited number of ads during children's programs. Congressman Edward J. Markey (D., Mass.), chairman of the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and Finance, is one of many representatives alarmed about the state of children's TV since deregulation. In March 1988, he addressed the House regarding possible legislative solutions to overcommercialization.

Along with a bi-partisan group of representatives, Markey then introduced the Children's Television Act, which sought to reinstate ad limits similar to those dropped by the FCC. Under the act, advertising shown during children's programs would be limited to 10.5 minutes an hour on weekends and 12 minutes an hour on weekdays, effective January 1, 1990. A more controversial element in the bill would force the FCC, in considering license renewals, to weigh whether a TV station had "served the educational and informational needs of children in its overall programming.'

It must be noted that the FCC rarely refuses a license renewal application. General-interest programs like Cosby can qualify as shows which address the needs of children. Nonetheless, Markey saw the renewal threat as a chance to make the industry more self-conscious about its children's fare. He said he hoped decision-makers would think "better safe than sorry" as they planned programming schedules for children.

Naturally, there was opposition to the bill from the TV and toy industries and some other political factions. The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), which represents commercial broadcasters, has consistently lobbied against congressional intervention in its business and worked to soften the legislation. The NAB cited one survey of 469 TV stations which claimed that 88 percent were already within the advertising limits, with an average of eight minutes and 38 seconds of ads per hour. (The stations that exceeded the proposed limits were mostly in the top 20 television markets, i.e. big cities like New York and L.A.) Markey's aides, on the other hand, claimed that about 20 percent of the nation's TV stations still exceed the limits.

The NAB expressed concern that the license renewal issue was a small step on the road toward letting Congress dictate content. The FCC itself declined to take a position on the bill.



## Kidvid

Patrick termed it "unnecessary and illadvised." Another spokesman claimed the agency is considering several proposals regarding children's advertising. One congressman suggested that a better solution would be to allow the broadcast industry an anti-trust exemption so that it could create a code of conduct.

Battle lines were drawn over the bill. As the two forces volleyed back and forth for a compromise, both softened somewhat. By the time the bill reached the House floor, it had been stripped of a provision requiring broadcasters to schedule an hour of educational programming each day. Likewise, a portion of the bill that attacked program-length commercials was also deleted. (Several court suits are pending in this area, and the FCC is considering rules on it. Markey promises to revisit the issue if it is not resolved.) All concerned agreed to support the bill as revised.

With overwhelming approval from both political parties, it looked like HR 3966 couldn't miss. The House vote in June was 328 to 78 in favor of the Children's Television Act, and the Senate approved it in October by a unanimous

voice vote.

So how and why would the president veto such a bill?

First the how. After Congress sends an approved bill to the president, he has ten days (not counting Sundays) to act. If he signs it, it becomes law. If he fails to act within ten days while Congress is in session, the bill becomes law. But if he fails to act within ten days while Congress is in recess (as it was in November), the measure dies. And that's what President Reagan did, "pocketing" the bill so that it would have to be revived by Congress in a new session.

According to official White House announcements, the president's opinion was that "this bill simply cannot be reconciled with the freedom of expression secured by our Constitution." His memorandum on the topic went on to say that conditioning license renewals on the federal government's determination of the adequacy of a station's programming would violate the First Amendment

The president also voiced concern that limiting commercial time (and

Pointy-Headed Fun: Two of the anthropomorphic stars of Grandpa's Magical Toys



therefore revenues) on children's programming placed the government in the "inappropriate" position of favoring other types of programming. "While I applaud efforts to increase the amount and quality of children's television programming," he stated, "the Constitution simply does not empower the federal government to oversee the programming decisions of broadcasters in the manner prescribed by this bill."

Speaking for disappointed advocates of the bill, Markey came back with a scathing indictment of the veto, saying, "The president's actions represent a victory for the toy and cereal hucksters, and a major defeat for our nation's children." He vowed not to give up the fight toward better children's television. If they haven't already, Congress should be submitting legislation similar to HR 3966 to President Bush sometime soon. We urge you to contact your senator and congressional representative to have your say in the future of children's TV. Or write us with your comments and we'll pass them along.

#### Wee Sing Presents: Grandpa's Magical Toys

1988. 56m. V only. \$21.95. Price Stern Sloan. Image: good. Ages 2 to 6.

Based on a popular sing-along audio cassette series, Wee Sing videos have, so far, been a hit (the delightful King Cole's Party) and miss (the cloying Wee Sing

Together) proposition. With this third installment, the series moves solidly into the plus column. As with the others, strong production values abound in the sets, costumes and modernized soundtrack of young classics from "Hokey Pokey" to a variety of clapping and jump-rope games. This engaging show—like King Cole's Party—features a sweet but not sugary cast that plays out a gentle fantasy, set in Grandpa's toy shop. A highly repeatable and original quality video program.

#### Tommy Tricker and the Stamp Traveler

1988. Wr./dir. Michael Rubbo. 101m. (G) \$39.95 Family Image: good. Ages 5 to 13.

\$39.95 Family. Image: good. Ages 5 to 13. Often called the Disney of Canada, producer Rock Demers releases live-action features for kids that provide wholesome adventure without pandering to baser commercial instincts. Tom my Tricker's a conniver and likable only as one gets to understand the origins of his trickery. Ralph, the real hero of the tale, is a stuttering introvert who finds his courage as a stamp traveler, literally shrinking to postage-stamp size and riding on letters to China and Australia in search of rare collectibles. With brief animation and a surfeit of fine travelogue photography and fun adventure, this is less like Disney than a low-budget, highquality variation on Spielberg. Firstclass family entertainment.

## Directory

#### HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

Andrei Rubley

1966. B&W/Color. Co-wr./dir. Andrei Tarkovsky. Superbly photographed Russian film about 15th century artist; among director's best. 181m. 2 cas. sub. \$59.95. Forum.

The Big Deal on Madonna Street

1956. B&W. Vittorio Gassman, Marcello Mastroianni, Renato Salvatori; dir. Mario Monicelli. Terrific cast in spoof about inept would-be safecrackers. 91m. Hi sub. \$69.95. Connoisseur.

**Bull Durham** 

1988. Susan Sarandon, Kevin Costner, Tim Robbins; wr./dir. Ron Shelton. Sly, sexy, literate comedy: baseball groupie beds minor-league team's jaded catcher, talented rookie pitcher. 108m. (R) Hi ss cc \$89.98. Orion.

The Burmese Harp

1956. B&W. Rentato Mikuni, Shoji Yasui; dir. Kon Ichikawa. Powerful drama with haunting score: Japanese soldier shocked by overwhelming number of casualties at close of WW II. 116m. Hi sub. \$79.95.

Dark Habits

1984. Christina Pascual, Julieta Serrano, Carmen Maura; wr./dir. Pedro Almodovar. Irreverent farce from acclaimed Spanish director: eccentric nuns shelter nightclub singer in trouble with police. Letterboxed. 116m. Hi sub. \$79.95. Cinevista.



My Three Nuns: A convent of eccentric sisters takes in a fugitive in Pedro Almodovar's Dark Habits.

Die Hard

1988. Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, Alan Rickman, Alexander Godunov; dir. John McTiernan. Last summer's best action flick: lone cop takes on violent thieves in highrise office building. 132m. (R) Hi ss cc \$89.98. CBS/Fox.

A Fish Called Wanda

1988. John Cleese, Jamie Lee Curtis, Kevin Kline, Michael Palin; wr. Cleese, dir. Charles Crichton. Uptight lawyer seduced by shapely con artist. 108m. (R) Hi ss cc \$89.98. CBS/Fox.

Floating Weeds

1959. Ganjiro Nakamura, Machiko Kyo; dir. Yasujiro Ozu. Actor meets his illegitimate son, woman he abandoned during troupe's visit to remote island. 119m. Hi sub. \$79.95. Connoisseur.

General Della Rovere

1960. B&W. Vittorio De Sica, Sandra Milo, Hannes Messemer; dir. Roberto Rossellini. De Sica great as Italian swindler forced by Nazis to impersonate resistance leader they've accidentally shot. 129m. Hi sub. \$59.95. Connoisseur.

L'Avventura

1960. B&W. Monica Vitti, Gabriele Ferzetti; co-wr./dir. Michelangelo Antonioni. Slow, thoughtful study of alienation, failed relationships: girl disappears during yachting weekend. 145m. Hi \$79.95. Connoisseur.

Love with the Proper Stranger 1964. B&W. Natalie Wood, Steve McQueen, Edie Adams, Herschel Bernardi; dir. Robert Mulligan. Bittersweet Manhattan romance between musician, sales girl; enhanced by location filming. 102m. Hi \$19.95. Paramount.

The River

1951. Patricia Walters, Nora Swinburne, Arthur Shields; dir. Jean Renoir. Inspired, lyrical adaptation of Rumer Godden novel about British family in India. 99m. Hi sub. \$79.95. Connoisseur.

#### PROGRAM LEGEND

#### DATE

Vaties according to type of program. Films: original theatrical release. Made-for-broadcast: first telecast. Made-for-vidco: first release in any format. Compilations: production of collected work.

#### **FORMAT**

All programs are available in Beta and VHS unless noted. All programs on disc are also available on tape unless noted.

B: Beta cassette V: VHS cassette 8: 8mm cassette LV: LaserVision videodisc in CLV or CAV format.

#### OldUA

All available audio information is provided. Dolby Noise reduction, used on virtually all VHS tapes, is not noted.

St: stereo
Hi: Hi-Fi
ss: Dolby surround
stereo
co: closed-captioned
CX: CX encoded

#### **IMAGE RATING**

For theatrical releases, this rating refers to the transfer quality and visual appearance. For non-theatrical programs, it refers to overall visual quality.

excel. good fair poor

#### **ETCETERA**

Official MPAA ratings (G, PG, PG-13, R, X) are noted when available. All programs are in color unless noted. anim: animated B&W: black &

white
cas.: videocassette
comp.: compilation
ezd.: colorized
dig.: digital
dir.: directed by
dub.: dubbed
m.: minutes
n.a.: not available
nar.: narrated by
NR: not rated
pr.: produced by
RE: reissue
sub.: subtitled
TVM: made for
television

wr.: written by

## Directory

Spirit of the Beehlve

1973. Fernando Fernan Gomez, Teresa Gimpera, Ana Torrent; dir. Victor Erice. Little girl troubled by Karloff movie Frankenstein wanders off to find the monster in this absorbing drama. 95m. Hi sub. \$79.95. Connoisseur.

The Story of English, Vois. 1-5 1986. Host Robert MacNeil. Public TV series tracing English from Anglo-Saxon origins to current global prevalence. 540m. 5 cas. Hi \$139.95. Home Vision.

What Have i Done to Deserve This?!
1985. Carmen Maura, Chus Lampreave,
Juan Martinez; wt./dir. Pedro Almodovar.
Black comedy of harried Spanish housewife
trying to hold family together. Letterboxed.
100m. Hi sub. \$79.95. Cinevista.

#### COMEDY

Caddyshack li

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Dangerous Curves

1988. Tate Donovan, Danielle Von Zerneck, Robert Stack; dir. David Lewis. College student wrecks Porsche he was to deliver for billionaire. 93m. (PG) Hi ss V only. \$79.98. Also Spanish-sub. version. Vestron.

Dr. Alier

1988. Judy Landers, Billy Jacoby, Troy Donahue; co-pr./dir. Dave DeCoteau. Female bio prof from outer space. 90m. (R) Hi ss cc V \$79.95. B \$29.95. Paramount.

Elvira, Mistress of the Dark

1988. Elvira (Cassandra Peterson), Jeff Conaway, Susan Kellerman. Bust jokes abound in horror hostess' feature debut. 96m. (PG-13) Hi ss cc \$89.95. New World.

Eric Bogosian's Funhouse

1988. Performance piece skewering urban neuroses; first aired on Public TV's Alive from Off Center. 60m. Hi \$24.95. Pacific.

The Garden of Earthly Delights

1970. Luchy Sota, Jose Luis Lopez Vasquez; dir. Carlos Saura. In his dotage, wealthy man cannot remember where his fortune is buried. 99m. Hi sub. \$79.95. Connoisseur.

Giitch!

1988. Julia Nickson, Will Egan, Ted Lange; wr./pr./dir. Nico Mastorakis. Two thieves pose as moviemakers and audition beautiful women. 88m. (R) \$79.95. Academy.

Labels For Less



Christopher Reeve as Superman

Anglophiles take note: **VidAmerica** has given "Marching Orders" to a batallion of five British war films, including *The 49th Parallel, Battle Hell* (known in Britain as Yangtse Incident), Riddle of the Sands and Windom's Way—all reduced to \$19.95. Unfortunately, the best title here—The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp—is a butchered 115-minute version; only Criterion's disc edition comes from a complete 163-minute print.

• MGM/UA wants to "Make 'Em Laugh" with eight comedies, now \$19.95 each: The Goodbye Girl, The Russians Are Coming! The Russians Are Coming!, Spaceballs, Sleeper, Diner, The Sunshine Boys, My Favorite

Year and Victor/Victoria.

• Warner leads a "Video Hit Parade" with a dozen \$19.98 reissues, including all four Superman movies (the first three now closed-captioned and Dolby stereoencoded), Bonnie and Clyde (which, incidentally, reveals more of Faye Dunaway's unclothed figure than the widescreen theatrical version did), All the President's Men, Death Wish II, High Road to China, Four Friends, Lassiter, The Fourth Protocol and Crimes of the Heart.

• Also from Warner comes "Hollywood's Six-Shooter" Clint Eastwood in six mid-career titles, now \$19.98 each: Every Which Way But Loose and its follow-up, Any Which Way You Can, Pale Rider, Bronco Billy, Honkytonk Man and The Outlaw Josey Wales.

• Cannon fires off reissues of five former Thorn EMI/HBO and HBO Video titles, each now \$19.98: Dreamchild, Morons from Outer Space, The Magician of Lublin, Wild Geese II and The Holcroft Covenant.

• For \$24.95, **Virgin Vision** encourages videophiles to "Take a Virgin Home Tonight." Most notable in the 12-title lineup are Robert Townsend's Hollywood Shuffle, Mel Gibson in Attack Force Z and Christopher Walken in Deadline.

The Great Outdoors

1988. Dan Aykroyd, John Candy, Stephanie Faracy; wr. John Hughes; dir. Howard Deutch. Brothers-in-law at odds during lake-resort vacation. 91m. (PG) Hi ss \$89.95. MCA.

**Hot to Trot** 

1988. Bob Goldthwait, Virginia Madsen, Dabney Coleman; dir. Michael Dinner. Talking horse adept at stock speculation. 83m. (PG) Hi ss ec V \$89.95. B \$24.95. Also Spanish-sub. version V only. Warner.

**Loose Connections** 

1988. Lindsay Duncan, Stephen Rea; dir. Richard Eyre. Woman stranded en route to feminist convention. 90m. Hi \$79.95. Pacific.

Someone to Love

1988. Henry Jaglom, Andrea Marcovicci, Sally Kellerman, Orson Welles; wr./dir. Jaglom. Director gathers friends for Valentine's Day party, films their conversations. 110m. (R) Hi cc V \$79.95. B \$29.95. Paramount.

Whiffs

1976. Elliott Gould, Eddie Albert, Jennifer O'Neil, Harry Guardino; dir. Ted Post. Ex-Army test subject becomes bank robber. 93m. (PG) Hi \$79.95. Media.

Whoops Apocalypse

1988. Loretta Swit, Peter Cook, Michael Richards, Herbert Lom; dir. Tom Bussmann. First woman President of the U.S. faces Caribbean dispute that could escalate into nuclear war. 93m. (R) Hi \$79.95. MGM/UA.

#### DRAMA

The Adventures of Charlie Chan, Vois. 1, 2 1958. B&W. J. Carrol Naish, Strother Martin, Honor Blackman. TV episodes with Naish as Oriental sleuth. Vol. 1: Blindman's Bluff, Noble Art of Murder, The Lost Face. Vol. 2: The Great Salvos, Dateline

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Elvira, Mistress of the Dar 1988. Elvira (Cassandra Po Conaway, Susan Kellerma abound in horror hostess' 96m. (PG-13) Hi ss cc \$8!

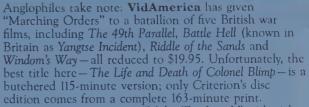
Erlc Bogoslan's Funhouse 1988. Performance piece's neuroses; first aired on Pu from Off Center. 60m. Hi

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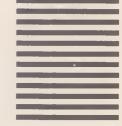
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**Border Radio** 

1988. B&W. John Doc, Chris D., Dave Alvin, co-wr./dir. Allison Anders, Dean Lent, Kurt Voss. Rock star disappears after stealing money owed him. 88m. (NR) Hi \$59.95. Pacific.

Cry from the Mountain

1985. James Cavan, Wes Parker, Rev. Billy Graham; dir. James F. Collier. Inspirational tale of father and son on kayak trip through Alaskan wilderness. 78m. (PG) Hi St \$39.95. IVE.

The Family

1987. Vittorio Gassman, Fanny Ardant, Philippe Noiret; co-wr./dir. Ettore Scola. Italian family gathers for birthday celebration. 128m. (PG) Hi sub. \$79.98. Dub. version V only. \$79.98. Also Spanishsub. version. Vestron.

Grand Illusion

1938. B&W. Jean Gabin, Pierre Fresnay; co-wr./dir. Jean Renoir. Restored version of classic set in WW I German prison camp. 114m. Hi sub. \$59.95. Connoisseur.

In a Shallow Grave

1988. Michael Biehn, Patrick Dempsey, Maureen Mueller; wr./dir. Kenneth Bowser. Disfigured WW 11 vet. 91m. (R) Hi \$79.95. Warner.

Joe

1970. Peter Boyle, Susan Sarandon, Dennis Patrick; dir. John Avildsen. Boyle excellent as hippie-hating blue-collar bigot. IO7m. (R) Hi \$19.95. (RE) Cannon.

Juliet of the Spirits

1965. Giulietta Masina, Sandra Milo, Mario Pisu; dir. Federico Fellini. Visually sumptuous follow-up to 8-1/2: wife's fear that husband is unfaithful triggers freeassociative fantasies. Letterboxed. 148m. \$39.95. Forum.

Kansas

1988. Matt Dillon, Andrew McCarthy, Leslie Hope; dir. David Stevens. Drifter draws companion into bank robbery. Illm. (R) Hi cc \$89.95. Media.

Pascali's Island

1988. Ben Kingsley, Helen Mirren; wr./dir. James Dearden. Romantic triangle set against colorful Greek backdrop. 106m. (PG-13) Hi \$89.95. IVE.

Salome's Last Dance

1988. Glenda Jackson, Stratford Johns, Nickolas Grace; wr./dir. Ken Russell. Colorful fantasia of banned Oscar Wilde play staged in brothel. 89m. (R) Hi ss \$89.98. Also Spanish-sub. version. Vestron.

September Affair

1950. B&W. Joseph Cotten, Joan Fontaine, Jessica Tandy; dir. William Dieterle. Lovers, both married, miss plane out of Italy and find they've been reported dead in crash. 105m. \$19.95. Paramount.

Seven Hours to Judgment

1988. Beau Bridges, Ron Leibman, Julianne Phillips; dir. Bridges. Murdered woman's husband kidnaps judge's wife after he releases killers on technicality. 90m. (R) Hi ss \$89.95. Media.

Sins

1985. Joan Collins, Catherine Mary Stewart, Timothy Dalton, Gene Kelly. TV mini-series: pushy Paris dress designer's rise. 336m. 2 cas. Hi \$79.95. New World.

Under the Earth (Debajo del Mundo)

1986. Sergio Renan, Barbara Mugica, Victor LaPlace. After Nazi invasion, Polish family waits out WW II in subterranean quarters. 100m. Hi sub. \$69.95. New World.

**Unsettled Land** 

1988. Kelly McGillis, John Shea; dir. Uri Barbash. Preview of Arab-Israeli conflict in '20s Palestine. 109m. (PG) Hi \$79.98.

The Wizard of Loneliness

1988. Lukas Haas, Lea Thompson, Lance Guest; dir. Jenny Bowen. Boy sent to live with grandparents after mother dies, father volunteers for WW II combat. 110m. (PG-13) Hi St \$89.95. Virgin.

The World of Suzle Wong

1961. William Holden, Nancy Kwan, Sylvia Syms; dir. Richard Quine. American artist in Hong Kong falls for local prostitute. 129m. Hi \$19.95. Paramount.

# SCIENCE FICTION/HORROR

Alphaville

1965. B&W. Eddie Constantine, Anna Karina, Akim Tamiroff; wr./dir. Jean-Luc Godard. Stylish sci-fi: interstellar detective journeys to planet ruled by computers. 100m. \$59.95. Connoisseur.

The Brain

1988. Tom Breznahan, Cyndy Preston, David Gale; dir. Edward Hunt. Monster cerebellum from outer space gets its own TV show, drives viewers to murder, suicide. 94m. (R) Hi \$79.95. IVE.

The Carrier

1987. Gregory Fortescue, Steve Dixon, N. Paul Silverman; wr./dir. Nathan J. White. Town's residents out to kill one among them capable of melting flesh with a touch. 90m. (R) Hi V \$79.98. B \$29.98. Magnum.

Freeway Maniac

1988. Loren Winters, James Courtney; wr. Gahan Wilson, Paul Winters; dir. Winters. Escaped serial killer stalks actress whose testimony incriminated him. 94m. (NR) Hi \$79.95. Media.

Phantasm II

1988. James Le Gros, Reggie Bannister, Angus Scrimm; wr./dir. Don Coscarelli. Gruesome shockfest: mortician improves business with flying sphere. 97m. (R) Hi ss \$89.95. MCA.

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Poltergeist III

1988. Tom Skerritt, Nancy Allen, Heather O'Rourke, Zelda Rubinstein; co-wr./dir. Gary Sherman. Nasty spirits back again. 99m. (PG-13) Hi ss cc \$89.95. MGM/UA.

Waxwork

1988. Zach Galligan, Deborah Foreman, Patrick Macnee; wr./dir. Anthony Hickox. Wax-muscum figures come alive after hours. V only. 97m. (R) 100m. (NR) Hi \$89.98. Vestron.

# ACTION

Battle of Britain

1969. Laurence Olivicr, Trevor Howard, Michael Caine, Christopher Plummer; dir. Guy Hamilton. Royal Air Force repels Nazi Luftwaffe squadrons. 133m. Hi \$29.95. MGM/UA.

**Bloodsport** 

1988. Jcan Claude Van Damme, Leah Ayres; dir. Newt Arnold. Karate champ. 92m. (R) Hi ss cc \$89.95. Warner.

Caribe

1988. John Savage, Kara Glover; dir. Michael Kennedy. Ex-ClA agent trails woman smuggling explosives to Central American revolutionaries. 90m. (R) Hi V only. \$79.98. Vestron.

The Dead Pool

1988. Clint Eastwood, Patricia Clarkson, Liam Nceson; dir. Buddy Van Horn. Fifth Dirty Harry outing: woman TV reporter helps Callahan nab killer. 9lm. (R) Hi ss cc B/V \$89.95. 8 \$29.95. Also Spanish-sub. version V only. Warner.

The Deceivers

1988. Pierce Brosnan, Shashi Kapoor, Saced Jaffrey; dir. Nicholas Meyer. Adventurc set in 19th-century India. 100m. (PG-13) Hi ss cc \$89.95. Warner.

The Lighthorsemen

1988. Pcter Phelps, Jon Blake, John Walton; co-pr./dir. Simon Wincer. Australian WW I cpic: charge on occupied city of Beersheba. 115m. (originally 128m.) (PG) Hi ss cc \$79.95. Warner.

Never So Few

1959. Frank Sinatra, Gina Lollobrigida, Pcter Lawford, Steve McQueen; dir. John Sturges. Small U.S. guerilla force takes on Japanese army in WW II Burma. 125m. Hi St \$29.95. MGM/UA.

The Rescue

1988. Kevin Dillon, Marc Price, Charles Haid, Edward Albert; dir. Ferdinand Fairfax. U.S. Navy sub caught in cncmy waters off North Korea. 97m. (PG) Hi ss cc \$89.95. Touchstone.

# CHILDREN'S

The Adventures of Cubby Bear 1988 comp. B&W. Anim. Cartoons from Van Beuren Studio; includes Fiddling Fun (1934), Last Mail ('33). \$15.95. Loonic.

The Adventures of the Little Koala and Friends: Laura and the Mystery Egg 1987. Anim. TV fare with conservationist

slant; includes Save the Eucalyptus, Conquering Mount Breadknife. 47m. Hi \$14.95. Family.

Aesop's Fables, Vols. 1-2 1988 comps. B&W. Dir. Paul Terry. Silent cartoons (8 pcr cas.) with musical accompaniment, including Runaway Balloon (1925), Wicked City ('26), Up in the Air

Baby Songs, Vol. 3: Turn on the Music 1988. Live action/anim. Music videos for ages 4 to 7: "When Daddy Was a Little Boy," "Francic Had a Football," 9 more. 30m. Hi V only. \$14.95. Hi-Tops.

Classic Fairy Tales

('26). \$15.95. Loonic.

1983. Anim. BBC-TV adaptations of Hans Christian Andersen, Brothers Grimm stories; includes Princess and the Pea, Ugly Duckling, Rapunzel, Four Musicians. 62m. Hi \$14.95. Family.

Dot and Keeto

1986. Live action/anim. Pr./dir. Yoram Gross. Shrinking potion lets little girl explore insect world. 73m. Hi \$39.95. Family.

The Flintstone Kids

1988 comp. Anim. Adventures of pint-sizc Fred, Wilma, Barney and Betty. 92m. \$29.95. Worldvision.

Happy Birthday, Moon and Other Stories for Young Children 1988 comp. Anim. Adaptations of picturebooks; includes title story plus Peter's Chair, The Napping House, The Three Little Pigs. 28m. Hi \$22.50. CC.

It's Your First Kiss, Charlie Brown 1988. Anim. Dir. Phil Roman. Chuck takes the little red-haired girl to a school dance. 25m. Hi V only. \$14.95. Hi-Tops.

The Mysterious Tadpole and Other Stories 1988 comp. Anim. Award-winning picture-book adaptations: title story plus *The Five Chinese Brothers*, *The Wizard*, *Jonah and the Great Fish*. 35m. Hi \$22.50. CC.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Hot Rodding Teenagers

1987. Anim. Episodes of TV serics; includes A *Thing About Rats*, title story. 51m. Hi St \$14.95. Family.

### VERITE

Autobiography of an Unknown 1983. Color/B&W. Dir. Jean-Luc Leon. Portrait of writer-artist-director Jean Coctcau features film excerpts, footage of stage productions. 60m. Hi \$39.95. Home Vision.

Degas

1988. Wr./dir. Harry Rasky. Survey of artist's major works with segments on his life in Paris, travels to Italy, New Orleans. 58m. Hi \$39.95. Home Vision.

Jerusalem: A Musical Celebration 1986. Pr./dir. Christopher Higham. Violinist Isaac Stern reminisces on Israel's history, performs classical pieces in open-air

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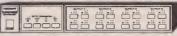
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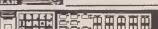
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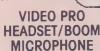
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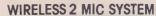
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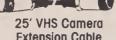
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1988. Nar. Bryant Gumbel, Dick Enberg. Highlights of NBC's Scoul coverage: Men's Track & Field, Boxing, Women's Track & Field, Gymnastics, Water Sports, Volleyball. 45m. ca. Hi \$19.95 ca. Wood.

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### Biloxi Blues

1988. Matthew Broderick, Christopher Walken; wr. Neil Simon. Comedy. 105m. (PG-13) ss CX dig. \$34.98. MCA.

1966. Virginia McKenna, Bill Travers. Drama. 95m. (G) CX dig. \$36.95. Image.

**Broadway Melody of 1940** 

1940. B&W. Fred Astaire, Eleanor Powell. Musical. 103m. CX \$34.95. MGM/UA.

### Casablanca

1943. B&W. Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman. Drama. New transfer from nitrate print. 104m. CX cc \$34.95. (RE) MGM/UA.

**Closely Watched Trains** 

1966. B&W. Vaclav Neckar; wr./dir. Jiri Menzel. Comedy/drama. Academy Awardwinner, Best Foreign Film. 89m. (NR) CX sub. dig. \$39.95. Image.

The Dead

1987. Anjelica Huston; dir. John Huston. Drama. 82m. (PG) ss CX dig. \$36.95.

Love Me or Leave Me

1955. James Cagney, Doris Day. Drama/ musical; songs chapter-encoded. 122m. St CX cc dig. 2 discs. \$39.95. MGM/UA.

Painting with Light 1988. Video art by David Hockney, Howard Hodgkin, others. CX dig. \$39.95. Image.

Poltergeist III

1988. Tom Skerritt, Nancy Allen, Heather O'Rourke. Horror. 99m. (PG-13) ss CX cc dig. \$34.95. MGM/UA.

1988. Sidney Poitier, Tom Berenger. Action. 109m. (R) ss CX cc dig. \$36.95. Touchstone.

The Shop on Main Street

1965. B&W. Ida Kaminska; dir. Jan Kadar. Drama. 128m. CX sub. dig. 2 discs. \$49.95. Image.

Sweet Smell of Success

1957. B&W. Burt Lancaster, Tony Curtis. Drama. 97m. CX \$34.95. MGM/UA.

Three Men and a Baby

1987. Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, Ted Danson. Comedy. 102m. (PG) ss CX cc dig. \$36.95. Touchstone.

### SOURCES

Tapes and discs are not available for sale directly from companies listed unless the phone number given specifies "orders." See end of listings for phone/mail-order distributors that may be able to help locate desired releases.

**Academy** Home Entertainment, Pinehaven Shore Rd., Shelburne, VT 05482; 800-972-0001.

Cannon Video, 640 San Vicente Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048; 213-658-2100.

CBS/Fox Video, 1211 Sixth Ave., New York, NY 10036; 212-819-3200.

CC Studios, Weston, CT 06883; 203-222-0002, 800-KIDS-VID.

Cinevista Video, 353 West 39 St., New York, NY 10018; 212-947-4373.

**Connoisseur** Video, 8455 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048; 213-653-8873; orders 800-356-3577.

Walt Disney Home Video, 500 S. Buena Vista St., Burbank, CA 91521; 818-840-1111.

Family Home Entertainment: see IVE.

Film Forum, 10000 East Williams St., Carson City, NV 89701; orders 800-232-1006, in CA 800-525-5216.

Fries Home Video, 6922 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA 90028; 213-466-2266.

HBO Video, 1370 Sixth Ave., New York, NY 10019; 212-977-8990.

Hi-Tops Video: see Media.

**Home Vision**, 5547 N. Ravenswood Ave., Chicago, IL 60640-1199; orders 800-262-8600, in MA 617-879-1720.

Image Entertainment, 6311 Romaine St., Hollywood, CA 90038; 213-468-8867.

IVE, 500 N. Ventu Park Rd., Newbury Park, CA 91320; 805-499-5827, orders 800-PLAY-IVE.

Laser Disc Corp. of America: see Pioneer.

Loonic Video, 2022 Taraval Street, San Francisco, CA 94116; orders 415-526-8070.

Magnum Entertainment, 9301 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90210; orders 213-278-9981.

MCA Home Video, 70 Universal City Plaza, Universal City, CA 91608; 818-777-4315.

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Paramount Home Video, 5555 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90038-3197; 213-468-5000.

Pioneer Artists, 2265 East 220 St., Long Beach, CA 90810; 213-835-6177.

Touchstone Home Video: see Disney.

Vestron Video, Box 10382, Stamford, CT 06901; 203-978-5400; orders ext. 2652.

VIEW Video, 34 East 23 St., New York, NY 10010; 212-674-5550.

Virgin Vision, 6100 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048; 213-857-5200.

Warner Home Video, 4000 Warner Blvd., Burbank, CA 91522; 818-954-6000.

Wood Knapp Video, 140 East 45 St., New York, NY 10017; 212-983-8192.

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Video Schoolhouse, 2611 Garden Rd., Monterey, CA 93940; 408-375-4474. 800-345-1441.

Videotakes, 220 Shrewsbury Ave., Red Bank, NJ 07701; 800-526-7002, 201-747-2444.

# Thinking in story form

Novice camcorder users are well-advised to learn how to use establishing shots to create a story structure. If you're visiting grandma's house, shoot a few seconds of the facade before entering. If grandma is bringing out baby's birthday cake, show her in the kitchen with the cake, then go to the dining room and show her bringing the cake to baby. Then zoom in for separate closeups of the cake and baby. With a little structuring, your footage will seem less like a jumble and more like a story even before you have begun the editing process.

continued from page 31

jacks, labeled A/V out, carries the output of the last channel selected by the tuner. The last column, labeled monitor, carries the signal being viewed.

All A/V jacks (except for S-video) are RCA-type pin jacks. The monitor jacks may be switched to fixed - good for recording - or variable, for feeding a hi-fi system. When using a hi-fi system, you can turn off the internal speakers but there is no provision to power external speakers with the set's amplifier.

The remote control is black, with a small switch that determines whether it will control the TV or a compatible Mitsubishi VCR. It has buttons for power, mute and Q.V. (last channel recall) and up/down rockers for volume, channel, input, video, audio and adjust. One button on the remote's side illuminates a green LED at the midpoint of each rocker. The blank part of the remote's top slides down to reveal more buttons, most of which do double duty to operate a VCR. The ten-digit keypad doubles for days of the week and Monday to Friday.

The picture-in-picture button produces an inset on the first push, a fourinset PIP strobe on the second, four-inset multi-channel search on the third and normal TV on the fourth. Exchange swaps the main and inset pictures. The pause button freezes the inset. If held down, it moves the inset through the quadrants. On a second press it strobes the succeeding images through the four insets. A third push cycles all the channels in memory through the four quadrants, and a fourth push of the pause button resumes normal TV.

The menu button gives numbered choices for time set, program timer set, timer hold (on/off), channel lock set, channel lock cancel and access locked channel. Selection is made with the numbered buttons. Other buttons are enter, display, off timer (sleep)/OTR, record, stop, video/TV, rewind/search, play, fast forward/search, slow/frame ad-

vance, + and

Operation. Using the basic functions is easy. Power, volume, channel, mute and Q.V. operate as on most TVs. Input selection cycles through the two RF and three A/V possibilities in either direction. The video selector cycles through tint, color, contrast, brightness, sharpness, notch filter on/off and video noise reduction on/off. An onscreen scale shows where in the range the control is set; the adjust rocker lets you change the condition displayed. The audio rocker cycles through stereo/SAP/

mono, bass, treble, balance and expansion on/off. The same adjust rocker also controls audio functions when displayed.

Programming the channel memory with auto program, add and erase is easy and obvious. The one departure from standard color set operation is the adjustment for the direction in which the set faces. Because the electron beam in the picture tube travels a long way be-

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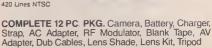
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**Performance.** Picture quality is rated excellent—compared to other 35-inch sets. This caveat is necessary because, as screen size increases, picture blemishes are enlarged, making 20-inchers generally better looking than 25s, and 25s better than 35s.

The set is rated for—and delivers—560 lines of horizontal resolution. It is about 50 percent brighter than the first 35-inch models because of an inhibiting reactant and scandium oxide in the cathode of the electron gun. Video signal-to-noise ratio is 53.6 decibels; chroma AM S/N is 61.4 dB and chroma PM S/N is 61.2 dB. The color temperature was measured at 7200 degrees Kelvin, and the colors are quite accurate except for a slightly orangeish red. This 35-incher looks better than its competitors.

While the set's internal audio amplifiers can deliver the entire audible range of 20 Hertz to 20 kilohertz within 3 dB, the speakers only span 50 Hz to 16 kHz at that tolerance. S/N for RF sources is 61 dB; for A/V sources 75 dB. Total harmonic distortion is less than 1 percent. Audio performance is very good/excellent.

Conclusion. Mitsubishi is still the only mass producer of 35-inch picture tubes, so it is no surprise that the company makes the best 35-inch direct view sets. The CK-3514R demonstrates the benefits of developing tube and circuitry synergistically and delivers an excellent picture for such a large tube. Audio performance is very good to excellent with the speakers and potentially excellent if coupled to a quality audio system. Ergonomics are excellent and the oak veneer cabinet is handsome. (A table model is available in black.) We recommend it highly among 35-inch direct view sets. Suggested price is \$3,200.

# RCA CAMCORDER

continued from page 32

mic mixing while dubbing, as well as the SP/EP switch, a volume control for the speaker and the multi-pin A/V input connector.

**Operation.** Basic camcorder functions are really simple. Load a battery and cassette, select camera position, turn on power, verify that the iris, focus

and white balance are set to automatic and shoot. Set the shutter speed to auto so that it chooses the best compromise between iris and shutter speed up to 1/200 second; faster action-stopping requires manual selection.

All the playback controls are active even in camera mode so you can review whole scenes, find spots for audio or video dubs and even insert edit, thanks to the flying erase head. You can add time, date and titles in two sizes. The word memory helps with a stock of common words like "birthday." Ease of operation and range of options are both excellent.

Performance. The CC320 is standard VHS, so horizontal resolution is about 250 lines. In almost every other picture measurement, however, it is competitive with the best Super VHS camcorders. This is largely due to the full-size head drum and two pairs of heads specifically optimized for SP and EP. The unweighted video signal-to-noise ratio is 44.1 decibels at SP and 41.1 dB at EP. The weighted video S/N is 51.8 dB at SP and 47.3 dB at EP. Chroma AM S/N is 47.5 dB at SP and 43.8 dB at EP. Chroma PM S/N, the weakest of the CC320's measurements, is 40.8 dB at SP



# RCA CC320 Pro Edit VHS Camenrder

DATA

Suggested Price: \$1,499

Weight: 6.0 pounds, without battery and cassette

Dimensions: 9-1/4 x 5-3/8 x 15 inches (h/w/d)

Power Requirements: 9.6 VDC

Power Consumption: 9.6 W (normal)

Image Sensor: 2/3-inch high-resolution MOS

f/1.2, 8x (11-88 mm) power zoom with auto macro range

Filter Diameter: 52 mm

Minimum Focusing Distance:

4 feet, plus macro range

Autofocus: infrared Minlmum Illumination:

rated-5 lux: measured-9 lux for 50

auto, switchable to manual

Sensitivity: single range

High-Speed Shutter: 1/60 (normal), 1/120, 1/250, 1/1000 and

1/2000-second, plus automatic to 1/200

Interval Timer: 1-second every 30 sec, 1 min., 2 min., 5 min.,

White Balance: auto or manual with incandescent. fluorescent, direct sun and cloudy bright

Vlewfinder:

or manual

electronic with onscreen displays for counter/ memory/time remaining, shutter speed, index, A/V dub, interval setting, status, low battery, dew, date and time

Viewfinder Controls: diopter focus, brightness and electrical focus

VCR Controls: camera/playback, rewind/search, play, fast forward/search, stop, pause/still, audio dub and video dub

Microphone: electret condenser

Jacks: mini jacks for external mic and earphone, separate multi-pin jacks for A/V input and output, concentric jack for DC power

Tape Format: VHS

Tape Speeds: SP and EP

Play Speed Select: auto

Video Heads: 4; std. 62-mm drum; pair optimized for SP, pair for EP

Flying Erase Head: 1

Cue & Review (Search): 3x, SP; 9x, EP, approx.

Fast Forward/ Rewind Time: approx. 5 min. for T-120

Remote: optional wired pause

Counter: 4 digits, counter or time remaining, with memory

**Program Start** Locator/Index/Cue: records but does not read index marks

Linear Audio: mono

Other Features: auto fade, still frame, separate eject, audio dub, video dub, insert edit, auto rewind

Accessories: supplied—CPS08 AC adapter/charger, BP96FL 90-min. battery, A/V input cable, RF output adapter, AV output cable, shoulder strap, clock battery, RF cable and matching transformer: optional-soft case. hard case, syncro edit cable, remote start/stop switch on 15-foot cable, wireiess mic, 1.5x tele extender, 0.6x wide angle lens, special effects lens kit, film/ slide adapter, 12 VDC car battery cord, power

Y cable, portable DC

light, tripods, tripod

carrying case, BP96FS 45-min. battery, BP96FL 90-min battery, 12-volt long play battery (car battery cord needed), head cleaning kit, lens care kit, dual-well AC adapter charger

RESULTS

Horlz. Resolution: 250 lines

S/N. Video Luminance. Unweighted: 44.1 dB, SP; 41.1 dB, EP

S/N, Video Luminance, Weighted: 51.8 dB, SP: 47.3 dB, EP

S/N, Chroma AM: 47.5 dB, SP; 43.8 dB, EP

S/N, Chroma PM: 40.8 dB, SP; 40.1 dB, EP

**Audio Frequency** Response, -3 dB: 100 Hz-10 kHz, SP; 100 Hz-6.3 kHz, EP

S/N. Audio: 41.7 dB Audio Distortion: 1.2%

RATINGS

Picture Quality: excellent for VHS

Audio Quality: good

Operational Ease:

Overall Performance: very good/excellent

and 40.1 dB at EP. These results are excellent for VHS camcorders and underscore how much better SP is than EP when the extra pair of heads is available.

Audio performance is good: frequenresponse at the -3 dB points is 100 Hertz to 10 kilohertz at SP and 100 Hz to 6.3 kHz at EP. Audio S/N is 41.7 dB; total harmonic distortion is 1.2 percent.

Conclusion. The RCA CC320 deserves as much praise for its in-camera production features as for performance. Even with so many features, ease of operation is excellent. Picture quality is excellent. With very low noise measurements and good audio quality, we rate overall performance very good to excellent. The suggested price is \$1,499. We recommend it highly.

# Bank shots with remotes

Couch Potato Etiquette Dept.: Does pointing your VCR's remote at the machine require raising your arm at an awkward angle? Pointing directly at the machine may not be necessary. Some VCR makers, such as Sony, provide remotes that work even when not aimed straight at the machine. Also, most remotes can bounce an infrared signal off a window, a mirror or a glass picture frame - the better to achieve that Zenlike state of perfect stillness, which can only enhance your stature as a sofa spud.

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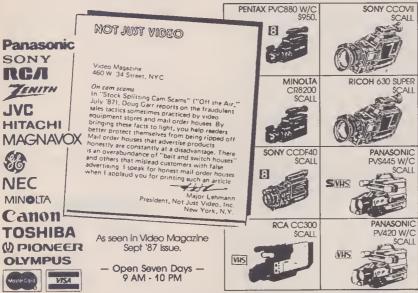
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any of the other controls that give you a 15% Discounts on all Laser Discs leg up in difficult situations. Still, for this camcorder's limited capabilities, its op-· SPECIAL This Month on Laser Disc erational ease is excellent. Performance. The camera portion is rated for a minimum illumination of 8 lux and delivers 50 IRE units (50 percent contrast) at 14 lux. It also delivers about 400 lines of horizontal resolu-· Call for New Release Update tion, but the VCR section limits recording and playback to about 240 lines. The recorder has unweighted vid-· Hotline Number Updated Weekly eo signal-to-noise ratios of 41.1 decibels 20% OFF With Orders of 4 or More at SP and 38.5 dB at EP with weighted Discs.. measurements about 3 to 4 dB higher. **OVER 40 TITLES at \$19.99** Chroma AM S/N is 43.3 dB at SP and Compact Discs - 15 - 20% OFF LIST 40.5 dB at EP, while chroma PM S/N is Polygram Titles 15% OFF LIST 42.8 dB at SP and 40.2 dB at EP. These THIS MONTH'S SPECIALS ... measurements are for playback only Die Hard (Letterbox) \$38.98
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**VIDEOTESTS** 

continued from page 31

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You can lock the focus setting, change from normal to 1/1000-second shutter speed, turn the recordable display on or off, run or pause the camera and switch the alarm on or off. From the back you can change tape speed and adjust date, time and age. The clock battery keeps the data accurate for about a year and there is little need to change the display unless you have more than one child whose age you want to record. The age is automatically updated by the clock.

The finder symbols are mostly selfexplanatory. Time remaining replaces the usual counter and a graphic symbol indicates both focus lock and low contrast. A frame in the center marks the autofocus detection zones. A dew drop indicates moisture, and there are legends for low battery, low clock battery, EP and record. Playback is straightforward and there is no way to record video from an external source.

Having so few controls is a mixed blessing. There is little for a rank amateur to foul up, but there is also little to adjust. The lack of manual zoom confines you to the power zoom speed. The absence of a focus ring leaves you fudging to get focus locked just right. Nor are there backlight compensation, an iris lock, white balance correction or

optimized for the EP speed. There is a continued on page 103

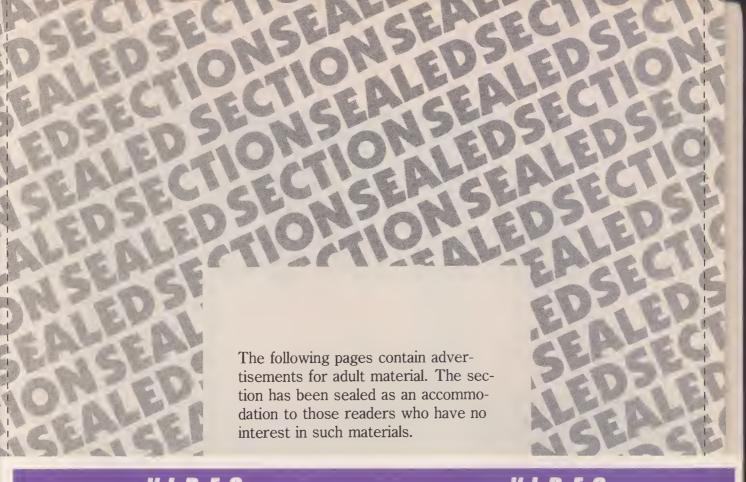
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continued from page 31

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# MAIL-ORDER GUIDELINES

At VIDEO Magazine, we believe our readers should get what they order from our mail-order advertisers at the prices indicated and in a timely fashion. We stand behind that belief by taking steps to determine that an advertiser is reputable and reliable before accepting an advertisement. Additionally, if we learn that an advertiser engages in a regular pattern of unfair or improper business practices, we will deny that advertiser the opportunity to advertise in VIDEO Magazine.

Nonetheless, the responsibility for fair dealing ultimately lies with the advertisers themselves, and unfortunately VIDEO Magazine cannot guarantee their behavior. Therefore, we feel it is important for our readers to know what their rights are and to follow the tips set forth below for purchasing merchandise by mail. Further, we are prepared to use our best efforts to assist any customer who has been improperly or unfairly dealt with by one of our advertisers.

Our requirements for advertising in VIDEO Magazine and our offer of assistance to aggrieved purchasers do not in any way limit either the obligation of an advertiser to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations or our customers' ability to enforce their rights under those laws.

### MAIL-ORDER BILL OF RIGHTS

Under federal law, if you order advertised merchandise by mail, the advertiser must ship your order when promised in the advertisement—or, if no delivery date is promised, within 30 days of receiving your order. If the advertiser fails to ship your order in a timely fashion, you may cancel your order and are entitled to a prompt refund.

If the initial shipping date eannot be met, the advertiser must notify you in writing and give you the option of either cancelling your order and receiving a full refund or agreeing to a new shipping date.

If the new shipping date is less than 30 days after the original shipping

date, the merchandise may be shipped to you unless you notify the advertiser in writing of your desire to eancel. If the new shipping date is *more* than 30 days after the original shipping date, or no new shipping date is provided, your order must be cancelled by the advertiser unless you inform the advertiser in writing that you still want the merchandise.

If the advertiser is unable to meet the new shipping date, the option process starts again—except that, regardless of the length of the second delay, the order must be eancelled unless you inform the advertiser in writing that you consent to the delay. If you accept an indefinite delay, you may change your mind at any time and so notify the advertiser in writing.

*Note:* The 30-day time period does not begin to run on a credit eard sale until the advertiser charges your aecount. Also, these regulations do not apply to C.O.D. orders.

If your order is eancelled, a refund must be made within 7 days on eash purchases or within one billing eyele on eredit card purchases.

You may keep any unordered merchandise sent to you; you need not pay for it or send it back. An advertiser who sends you a bill or otherwise attempts to collect any money from you for unordered merchandise is in violation of federal law.

*Note:* These regulations do not pertain to orders placed over the telephone and charged to a credit card.

# SUGGESTIONS FOR MAIL-ORDER PURCHASES

- 1. Read the ad earefully.
- 2. Whether you place your order by mail or by telephone, confirm the exact price (including any rebates) and any additional costs such as warranties, shipping, handling and insurance before you place your order.
- .3. Cheek with the advertiser regrading any warranties offered or available for purchase.
- 4. Check whether the advertiser has a return policy.
- 5. Keep a record of your order and all other transactions and get the names of all persons with whom you speak.
- 6. Never send eash. Pay by check or money order or with a credit eard so you will have a record of your transaction. If you pay by credit card, you may have a greater measure of recourse in the event the advertiser does not perform. (Cheek the complaint procedures of your credit eard companies.)
- 7. If you receive damaged or improper merchandise, contact the advertiser as soon as possible.

- 8. Get a receipt from the shipper whenever you return merchandise.
- 9. Since VIDEO Magazine will not continue to accept advertising from businesses that have engaged in a regular pattern of unfair or improper dealing with our readers, try to determine which have been long-standing advertisers in VIDEO Magazine.
- 10. It is your responsibility to determine whether any statute or regulation—local, customs or otherwise—may prohibit or prevent the delivery of any particular product.

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- 1. Allow 30 days for receipt of order or delay notification.
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- 3. Allow two weeks for a response from the advertiser.
- 4. If your complaint is still not resolved, contact us *in writing* (no phone calls, please), enclosing copies of all correspondence and proof of payment along with an explanation of what has transpired.

### Mail to:

VIDEO Magazine Advertiser Complaint Dept. 460 West 34th Street New York, NY 10001

Other organizations that can assist you if you have a problem.

The Direct Mail Marketing Association Mail Order Action Line 6 East 43rd Street New York, NY 10017

Your local postmaster (Ask for the name and address of the appropriate "Inspector-in-Charge.")

Your state or local consumer protection office or the office closest to the advertiser.

The Better Business Bureau.

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For auditional information, circle No. 47 on Reader Serviu. Caf

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# JVC GR-A30U VHS-C Camcorder

DATA

Suggested Price: \$1,299

Weight: 2.5 pounds without battery and cassette

Dimensions: 5-3/4 x 4-3/16 x 10-3/4 inches (h/w/d)

Power Requirements: 9.6 VDC

Power Consumption: 8.8 W, average

Image Sensor: 1/2-inch CCD

Lens: f/1.4-2.0, 6x (8.5-51 mm) power zoom with auto macro range

Filter Size: 46 mm
Minimum Focusing
Distance: continuous
to about 1 inch with AF

Minimum Illumination: rated—8 lux; measured —14 lux for 50 IRE

Optimum Illumination: 700 lux

Irls: automatic
Sensitivity: single range

High-Speed Shutter: normal and 1/1000second

White Balance: auto only

Viewfinder:
electronic with onscreen
displays for time remaining, focus lock/low
contrast, high shutter
speed, EP, record, low
battery, AF detection
zone, dew, low clock bat-

tery, date, time and age Viewfinder Controls: diopter focus

VCR Controls: play, stop, rewind (search), fast forward (search), pause/still, display mode, display select and display set; the control cover is the camera/VCR switch

Microphone: electret condenser

Jacks: mini jacks for ext. mic and earphone, multi-pin jack for AV out and concentric jack for DC power in

Tape Format: VHS-C Tape Speeds: SP and EP Play Speed Select:

Play Speed Select: auto

Video Heads: 4, required by small drum

Flying Erase Head: 1

Cue & Review (Search): 3x, SP; 7x, EP, approx. Fast Forward/Rewind Time: 2 min. for TC-20

Counter Digits: 2—mins, remaining in 10 mln, steps to 20 min., 5-min. steps to 5 min., and 1-min. steps to zero

Linear Audio: mono

Other Features: autofocus, still frame, separate eject, insert edit

Absent Features: auto fade, interval timer, frame advance, slow motion, speed play, remote pause, remote, counter memory, program start locator/index/cue, audio dub, video dub, auto rewind, hi-fi audio

Accessories: supplied-AA-V5U power adapter/battery charger, BN-V6GU 50min. battery, C-P5U cassette adapter, RF-V3U RF unit and shoulder strap; optional—BN-V5GU 25-min. battery, BN-V7GU 80-min. báttery, car battery charger, car battery cord, A/V extension cable, conversion lens kit, AN output cable, conversion cable for 10-pin camera socket, carrying bag, carrying handle, wireless mic and extra supplied accessories

# RESULTS

Horlz. Resolution: camera—about 400 lines; recorder—240 lines

S/N, Video Luminance: rated—42 dB; measured—41.1 dB, SP, 38.5 dB, EP, unweighted; 44.9 dB, SP, 42.9 dB, EP, weighted S/N, Chroma AM:

43.3 dB, SP; 40.5 dB,EP S/N, Chroma PM: 42.8 dB, SP; 40.2 dB,EP Audio Frequency

Audio Frequency Response, -3 dB: 100 Hz-8 kHz, SP; 80 Hz-4 kHz, EP

S/N, Audio: 39.9 dB Audio Distortion: 1.4%

RATINGS
Picture Quality:

Picture Quality:
average
Audio Quality: average
Operational Ease:
excellent

Overall Performance:

continued from page 88

flying erase head for glitch-free scene transitions. Video quality is average for VHS and VHS-C camcorders.

The audio frequency response is 100 Hertz to 8 kilohertz, -3 dB at SP, and 80 Hz to 4 kHz, -3 dB at EP. The audio S/N is 39.9 dB and the total harmonic distortion is 1.3 percent. Audio quality is average at EP, a bit below average at SP.

Conclusion. The JVC GR-A30U

is a simple, easy-to-use camcorder that will find its way into the hearts of those who want point-and-shoot video. It achieves this goal and delivers respectable pictures and sound. However, if you wish to do more creative work, you may prefer one of JVC's more sophisticated camcorders. If simplicity in the VHS-C format is what you seek, we recommend the A30U without hesitation at its suggested price of \$1,299.

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# VIDEO EFFECTS TITLER MFJ-1480B . . . \$599.95

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And because it is expandable, the VET is never outdated. An external port lets you plug in creative add-on cartridges coming from MFJ that permit special effects, more fonts, flashing, special logos,

other languages and more!

An optional RS-232 tnterface (MFJ-1481, \$169.95) lets you interface with personal computers. With some programming you can superimpose antmated graphics, stored text and countless other effects from an IBM, Apple, Tandy, Commodore and other PCs. You're only limited by your imagination.

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### MFJ-1452 . . . \$299.95

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continued from page 33

strict dialogue to the center channel and minimize inter-channel leakage). A 20-millisecond delay to all channels permits the Z-80 processor to determine the correct positioning of each sound and direct it to the correct speaker in

Description. The CP-1 is a warm metallic gray; a shiny black band runs across the front panel. On the band are two windows: a two-row bar graph for adjusting the input level on the left and a multi-purpose alphanumeric display at right. Indicators for power, remote command received, system mute and effect mute are further to the right. Below the band are buttons for power, source I or II, monitor source or tape, monitor tape pre- or post-recording and a rotary control for input level to the processing

The top, bottom and sides are bare; the back has gold-plated RCA-type pin jacks, output controls and the power cord. Except for the mono center and subwoofer output channels, the jacks are organized in over-under stereo pairs. At the right are stereo pairs for sources I and II, tape in and tape out. The remaining three pairs are stereo outputs for main, side and rear, each situated beneath a miniature output level control. The center and subwoofer channels also have level controls. There is also a pushbutton for cancelling the phantom center channel if an active center channel

is being used.

The remote control, powered by two AAA cells, is the main operating control once the system is set up and balanced using the rear-panel controls. Furthest back on the remote's face are buttons for muting the effects or the entire system. The next two rows are pairs for effects up and down, balance left and right, balance front and back, and volume up and down. Twelve of the remaining 16 buttons are labelled with preset environments in groups of three each for panorama, ambience, reverb and surround. The panorama options are normal, wide and binaural. The ambience and reverb options each offer large, medium or small hall simulation; surround options are mono, stereo and Pro-Logic. The remaining four buttons are bank (which switches the 12 factory presets to user presets), parameter (which lets the user select what characteristics to change) and up/down adjustments. Parameters that may be userselected are input balance, listener posi-

Call toll-free and charge the

tion, speaker angle, low frequency width, rear level, rear rolloff, rear delay, room shape, room liveliness, rolloff, panorama effect, midrange reverb time, bass reverb time, front effect, rear effect, bass blend, auto azimuth/balance, rear noise chip, calibrate, set program name and memorize program. Not all of these options are available at the same time or are used for each of the four major processing modes.

Operation. Using the CP-1 is superficially quite easy. You connect it between the sound source (VCR, LV player or other audio device) and the amplifiers driving the speakers, turn on all of the equipment, adjust the levels and select the processing mode. However, that will deliver only a fraction of the processor's total capabilities. If you study the manual - a short course in acoustics, complete with references you'll learn a lot about the parameters you're controlling and be able to create and store near-perfect simulations of many acoustic spaces. We rate ease of operation as excellent because the machine can be used intuitively, but we strongly recommend the second step of study and experimentation to get the most out of the system.

Performance. There are two ways of evaluating this unit's performance: by objective measurements and subjective observation of the realism it imparts to the sound. The former method yields impressive results: frequency response of 10 Hertz to 100 kilohertz on unprocessed channels and 10 Hz to 16 kHz on processed ones (both within +1/-3 dB referenced to 1 kHz). Signal-to-noise ratios on all channels are above the rated 85decibel minimum, A-weighted, referenced to 1 kHz at maximum level.

Our measurements of total harmonic distortion matched Lexicon's ratings: the rear channels arc noisiest at 0.05 percent. Judging by mcasurements alone, the CP-1 is excellent. On the subjective level, we were equally impressed by the least leakage between channels that we've heard anywhere except six-channel 70 mm movie houses, and we found it competitive with the most elaborate hall simulations we've heard. We spent over two months experimenting with the user options and have not yet exhausted all the possibilities.

Conclusion. The Lexicon CP-1 is a very versatile audio processor with excellent out-of-the-box performance by its Dolby Pro Logic surround sound decoder. Tweaking with user modification of the parameters can further enhance performance. Its suggested retail price is \$1,295. We recommend it highly.

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# **CAMCORDERS**

continued from page 43

A full remote wireless microphone kit from Azden Corporation includes a receiver, a transmitter, a microphone and earphones. Operating on the FM band, the unit has two frequencies, 49.83 or 49.89 megahertz, and is effec-

tive as far away as 125 feet. Many other companies offer remote kits with various configurations and microphones.

For a camcorder-mounted microphone that zeroes in on a distant sound, consider the Sima TeleMike. It weighs about 2.5 ounces and has a volume control for adjusting sensitivity, which is monitored through supplied earphones. A variation on these earphones, sold separately under the name SoundCheck

(also from Sima), allows you to make an aircheck of what's being recorded. Azden also has a camcorder-mounted microphone with two pick-up positions—long-narrow or short-wide—depending on your need. It calls the ECZ 660 a "zoom" microphone.

## **POWER PACKS**

Unless your finger is always on the firing switch, a fully charged battery should get you through most events. Buy anyone who's lost power midway through a wedding or birthday party without a backup battery knows the value of extra power.

The easiest solution is to carry an outboard or supplementary power supply. If you've ever seen a video location crew, you've probably noticed one member with a battery beltcase or bandolier. In most instances, however, all you need is a few hours of shooting power, for which a variety of relatively small accessory packs come into play.

There are two main types of portable, rechargeable battery packs: Gel-Cells and NiCds. Gel-Cells hold charges longer, so if you shoot sporadically, they're the way to go. They're also less expensive. But NiCd packs can re-

charge up to 1,500 times.

For example, the Ambico V-0805 Gel-Cell kit supplies four to five hours of power for a camcorder and one hour for a 100-watt light. It can hold a charge for up to six months. But it's only good for about 250 recharges and weighs eight pounds. The Ambico Decathlon Rechargeable NiCd pack gives two to three hours shooting time, runs a light for about 35 minutes and holds a charge for a month. It's good for about 1,500 charges and weighs three pounds.

A more powerful pack, the Decathlon Plus, adds two hours to your shooting time and more than doubles the



# S-VHS shortcut

You can adapt high-grade VHS cassettes for Super VHS use by drilling a small recognition hole in the bottom of the cassette shell. The S-VHS machine senses the hole and records or plays in S-VHS mode. This is feasible because—unlike ED-Beta, which uses metal tape—S-VHS uses a high-grade tape not too dissimilar from regular VHS high grades. The results may not be as good as they would be with authorized S-VHS cassettes, but you should see an improvement.



## LUGGAGE

Why plunk down good money for video luggage? For protection, convenience and efficiency. Although the size of the case you buy depends in part on the size of your camcorder, a case that form-fits the unit leaves no room for tapes or accessories, so leave some breathing room for extras.

Many cases have interchangeable compartments with Velcro straps and binders so you can change the interior configuration, yet keep the camcorder snug and protected. A good case has lined or padded compartment separators, as well as body armor on the base and sides.

If you prefer a soft case, find one that is weather resistant with top and inner flaps that double-cover the contents when closed. If your camcorder is fairly heavy, make sure the strap is extra wide so it doesn't cut into your shoulder.

For extra protection, consider a hard case, such as the aluminum alloy cases from Zero-Halliburton or the rigid plastic ones from Pelican. Hard cases usually come with foam inserts which you cut out and mold to fit the contents.

With soft cases, the more you pay, the better the workmanship. When shopping for one, bring your gear with you and "test drive" the bag before you buy. A loaded bag may hang quite differently from an empty one. Also, though it may look big enough when you buy it, you may find it's too small when you get it home. There are cases made with backstrap attachments for hikers, wheels and dollies for major hauls, and clip-on "satellite" bags for accessories. There's also a plastic pouch from Ewa Marine that allows you to carry and use



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a camcorder in the rain. In short, there are off-the-rack bags for nearly every need.

All the accessories mentioned here. and more, are available in most camera and department stores. Just remember to match your purchases to your shooting needs, and to examine different brands before you buy. But any accessory, whether for light, sound or shooting stability, can substantially improve the quality of your videotapes. And that's what it's all about.

continued from page 48

you 75 graphics into which you can insert your own titles in ten type styles and sizes in a variety of colors. It is not broadcast quality but can add a lot of interest to home videos.

At the other end of the spectrum is a true Gen-lock device for the Amiga 500/2000: SuperGen from Digital Creations in Sacramento, California. For IBM PCs, the device is called Video Charley and is available from Progressive Image Technology in Folsom, Calif. Both units have a suggested price of \$749.95.

Once your computer has NTSC color video output and can Gen-lock, you have access to almost unlimited graphic effects. For example, the Ultimate 300 keying unit lets the Amiga 2000 overlay a live image (from a camera) over computer generated graphics.

Another black box available for the

Amiga has the unlikely name of Video Toaster (a development word that stuck), which is made by New Tek, in Topeka, Kansas. New Tek claims its \$1,400 Toaster lets you do almost the same kind of graphics you might see on a network movie-of-the-week opening.

Amazingly, these products are only the beginning. Home video editing is just starting to be taken seriously. As more manufacturers realize its potential, even more equipment will become available to help you turn a room in your house into a mini-television studio, and formerly crude videos into fascinating footage.

continued from page 50

people with "zero technical sense" - are revisionist takes on standard ones familiar to engineers and come with easy step-by-step instructions. Price: \$19.95 plus \$2 for shipping from Box 93547, Los Angeles, CA 90093-0547 (800-243-2688).

**Desktop Drummer.** Mix ominous percussive effects into your home productions with this 4- by 6-inch electronic drum kit by Sony. It plugs into any microphone input and would be good backup for keyboard or guitar soundtrack music. Price: \$49.95.

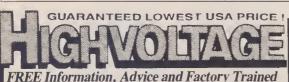
Stereo Microphones. Among the array of inexpensive microphones in the Radio Shack catalogue are two onepiece stereo units. Model 33-2012 lets you select a normal or wide stereo "image," while model 33-1065 lets you adjust the image with dual movable heads. Both run on AA batteries and have acceptably wide frequency responses. Prices: \$38.95 and \$26.95 respectively.

# Showing some spine

When putting a videocassette back into an open-ended jacket, put the tape into the jacket door-first, with the spine showing at the open end. This seals the open part of the bottom of the cassette, where the door closes, protecting the tape from dust and other contaminants. It also leaves the spine exposed, which is convenient if it has a label. Most blanktape manufacturers use open-ended jackets and all tape makers put the cassette in door-first. Follow their lead.

# Calling all tipsters

Do you know something we don't about VCRs, TVs, camcorders and other home video equipment? We'll share it with our readers if you share it with us as a "Tech Tip." We'll also give you credit and a \$25 bounty for each tip we publish. Tips should be informative and to the point. Please include your name, address and phone number — and a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you wish your submission returned. Send submissions to Tech Tips, Video Magazine, 460 West 34 St., New York, NY 10001.



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# Cutting through the high-definition hype

### BY DAVID LACHENBRUCH

More misinformation has been spread about high definition television than about any subject since the invention of sex. Newspapers and television have been full of conflicting reports about HDTV, and lots of them are just plain wrong. Here are some of the most prominent myths about video's wave of the future:

 There is a tremendous public demand for better TV pictures. Shopping mall surveys have shown that most viewers can hardly tell the difference between HDTV and a good conventional picture. Psychologically, the move to HDTV is considerably less significant than the transition from black & white to color or even from a lousy antenna to

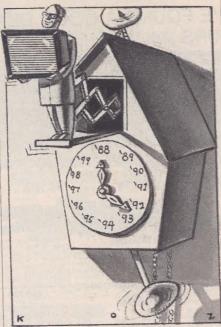
a good one.

The accepted definition of HDTV is a TV picture with resolution roughly equivalent to a 35 mm movie, a wide screen of approximately Cinemascope proportions, with improved color and stereophonic sound, preferably of Compact Disc quality. HDTV can best be appreciated on a large screen viewed from a distance about twice the screen height (where the scanning lines disappear), compared with five to seven times the screen height, the optimum viewing distance for current TV pictures. Watched this way, HDTV is a powerful, enveloping experience, but learning to watch this way is an evolutionary process.

• Japan and Europe are switching to HDTV broadcasting. So far, nobody's switching to anything. Japan is experimentally beaming HDTV pictures from satellites to 81 viewing locations - not homes - and by 1992 expects to be offering this service to public places, movie theaters and consumers who wish to buy special HDTV receivers. Standard landbased broadcasting-compatible with existing TVs-will continue. In Europe as well, HDTV broadcasting will be a direct-satellite affair, requiring special re-

ceivers incompatible with existing sets.

• The United States is hopelessly behind in HDTV. It's true that the Japanese have been working on HDTV for 20 years. While this gives them a lead, it also means their system ignores some modern principles, such as progressive scan, which eliminates a basic problem of all existing TV systems. Europe's HDTV system was developed in a crash effort in just two years. In the U.S., 21 HDTV systems have been proposed, and all are under development.



• Existing TVs will be useless when HDTV broadcasting begins. If only to prevent a second American revolution, the government would never consent to the withdrawal of America's first or second favorite pastime. The Federal Communications Commission has already issued guidelines which provide that any future HDTV system must be compatible with the existing broadcast system and use existing TV channels. This means that existing TVs would continue to pick up low-def pictures from HDTV transmissions and that HDTV sets could pick up standard as well as HDTV broadcasts.

· Broadcasters, cable operators, VCR manufacturers, satellite TV stations and even telephone companies will all pick different incompatible HDTV standards. Anybody programming for the American home wants the maximum audience. Americans simply are not going to buy one type of TV to receive over-theair broadcasts, one for cable and one for the VCR. In their own self-interest, it's inevitable that program originators will get together and use either the same HDTV system or systems which are compatible with one another.

 American HDTV broadcasting can start in a couple of years. Five to 10 years is more likely. A single HDTV system must still be developed, field-tested and approved. If this happens in three years, it will take another couple of years to tool and market the first transmitters

and receivers.

 After HDTV broadcasting starts, most Americans will quickly switch to HDTV receivers. Thirty-five years after the introduction of color TV, millions of people are still watching black & white. Since the first HDTVs are expected to cost about \$3,000 and up in 1989 dollars, according to the Electronic Industries Association, an HDTV will be a major investment. Many, perhaps most, people will wait until their present sets wear out before switching.

• A government-sponsored HDTV research program can "bring the consumer electronics industry back" to the U.S. It never left. Twenty TV manufacturing and assembly plants in this country make most of the color sets sold here from parts originating all over the globe. Most American consumer electronics producers are owned by foreign companies, and it's difficult to see how HDTV

can change this. HDTV will be the greatest invention since canned dog food. Most viewers really don't worry about the low definition of their TVs, mentally filling in any details missing from the picture. People will continue to select programs on the basis of content. Programming comes first, technology second. HDTV, 3DTV or technology second to the anything else won't change that.

David Lachenbruch is Editorial Director of Television Digest.

### Au REVOIR LES ENFANTS (GOODBYE, CHILDREN)

# Babette's Feast

# The two best foreign films of 1988

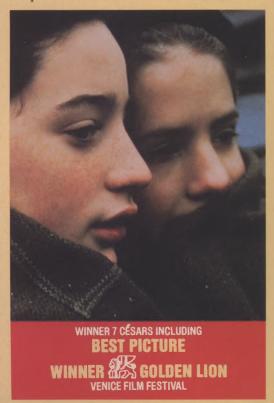
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DANISH AND FRENCH AVAILABLE WITH YELLOW ENGLISH SUBTITLES OR ENGLISH DUBBED

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